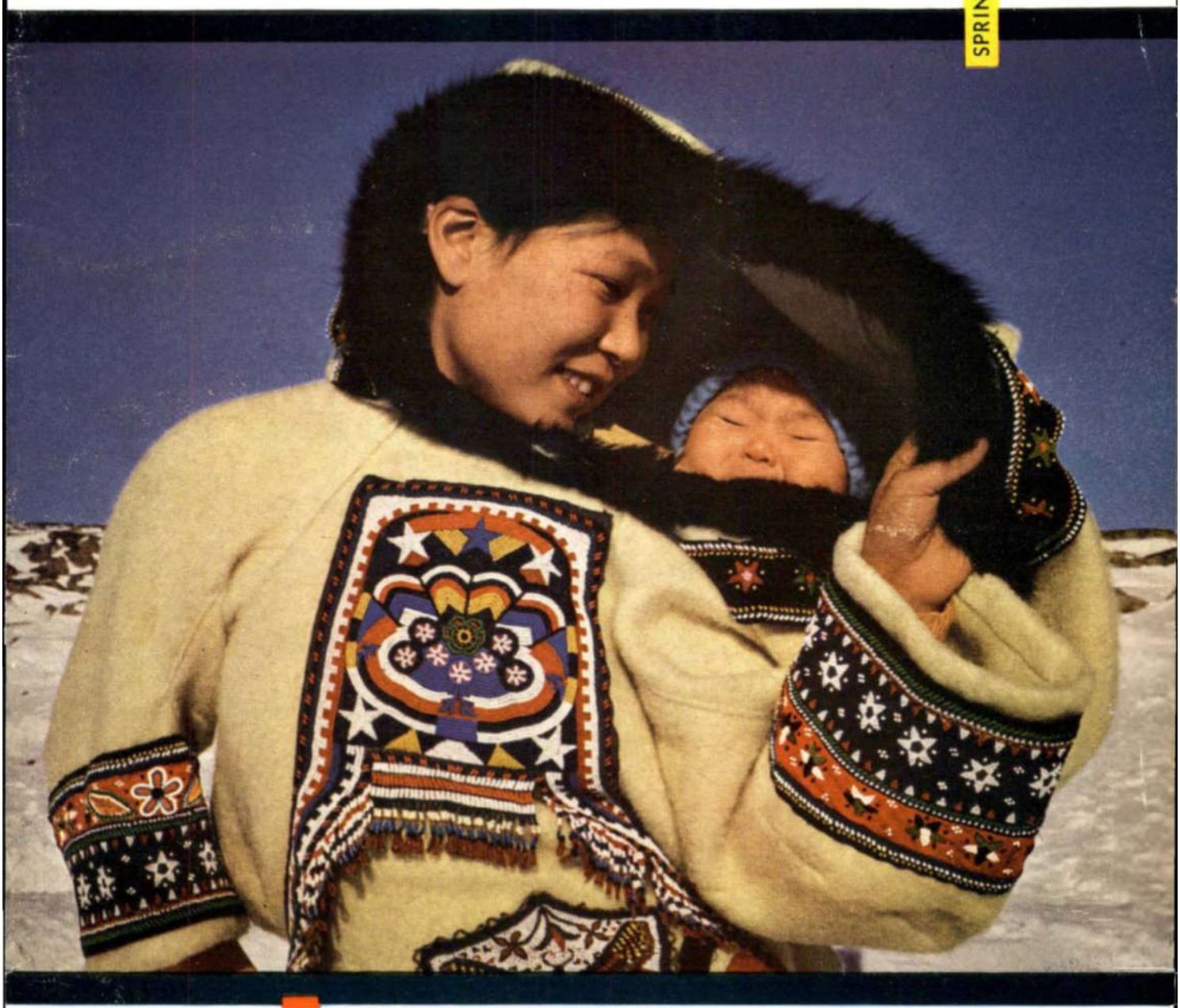
SPRING, 1956



The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Clifford Wilson, Editor

CONTENTS

OUTFIT 286 SPRING 1956

Eskimo Mother—*G. A. Ruskell* 1

The Caribou Crisis—*A. W. F. Banfield* 3

Canada's Unicorn—*T. Dunbabin* 8

The Living Stone 12

Bard of the Prairies—*M. A. MacLeod* 20

The Strangest Man—*R. M. Patterson* 26

Black on the Finlay—*G. Blanchet* 30

The Grand Seigneur

Ninety Years Later—*F. C. Swannell* 32

Retreat of the Sea—*John Macfie* 38

Minnesota Route—*Alvin C. Gluek* 44

Simpson as Banker 51

Spring Packet 53

Northern Books 55

TWO DOLLARS A YEAR

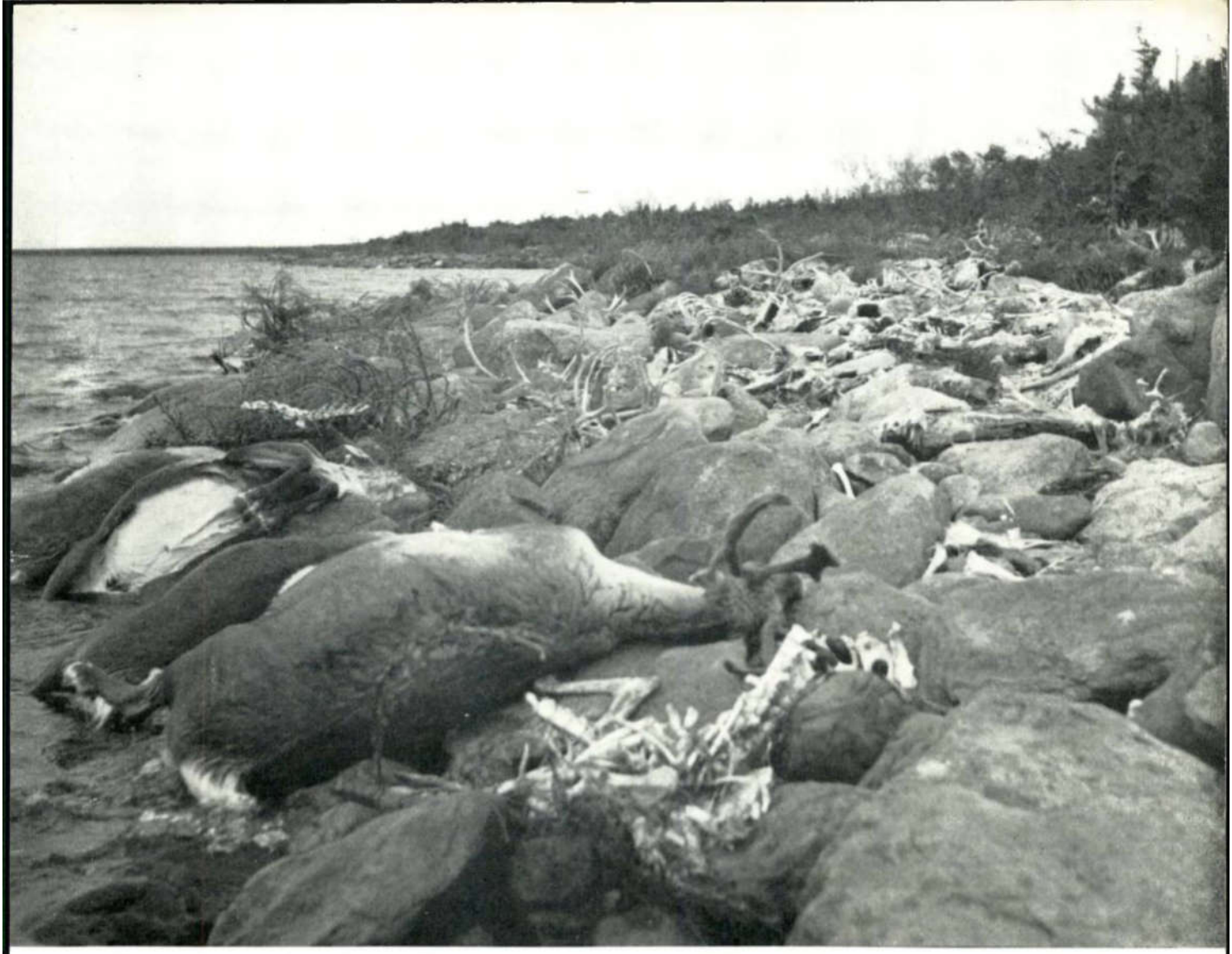
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE — Hudson's Bay Company. — WINNIPEG, CANADA

INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670.

THE BEAVER is published quarterly by the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, commonly known as the Hudson's Bay Company. It is edited at Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, at the office of the Canadian Committee. Subscription, $2.00 a year; $5.00 for three years; single copies, 50c. THE BEAVER is authorized as second class mail, Post Office Dept., Ottawa. Its editorial interests include the whole field of life and activity in the Canadian North, past and present, as well as the history of the more southerly regions, in both Canada and the United States, where Canadian fur traders formerly carried on business. THE BEAVER assumes no liability for unsolicited manuscript or photographs. Contributions are however solicited, and the utmost care will be taken of all material received. The entire content of THE BEAVER is protected by copyright, but reproduction rights may be given upon application. Address: THE BEAVER, Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg.

The Beaver is printed for the Hudson's Bay Company by Saults & Pollard Limited, Winnipeg, Canada; the engravings are made by Brigdens of Winnipeg Limited



A scene of carnage where swimming caribou have been speared from canoes. Each year thousands of carcasses are thus abandoned.

THE CARIBOU CRISIS

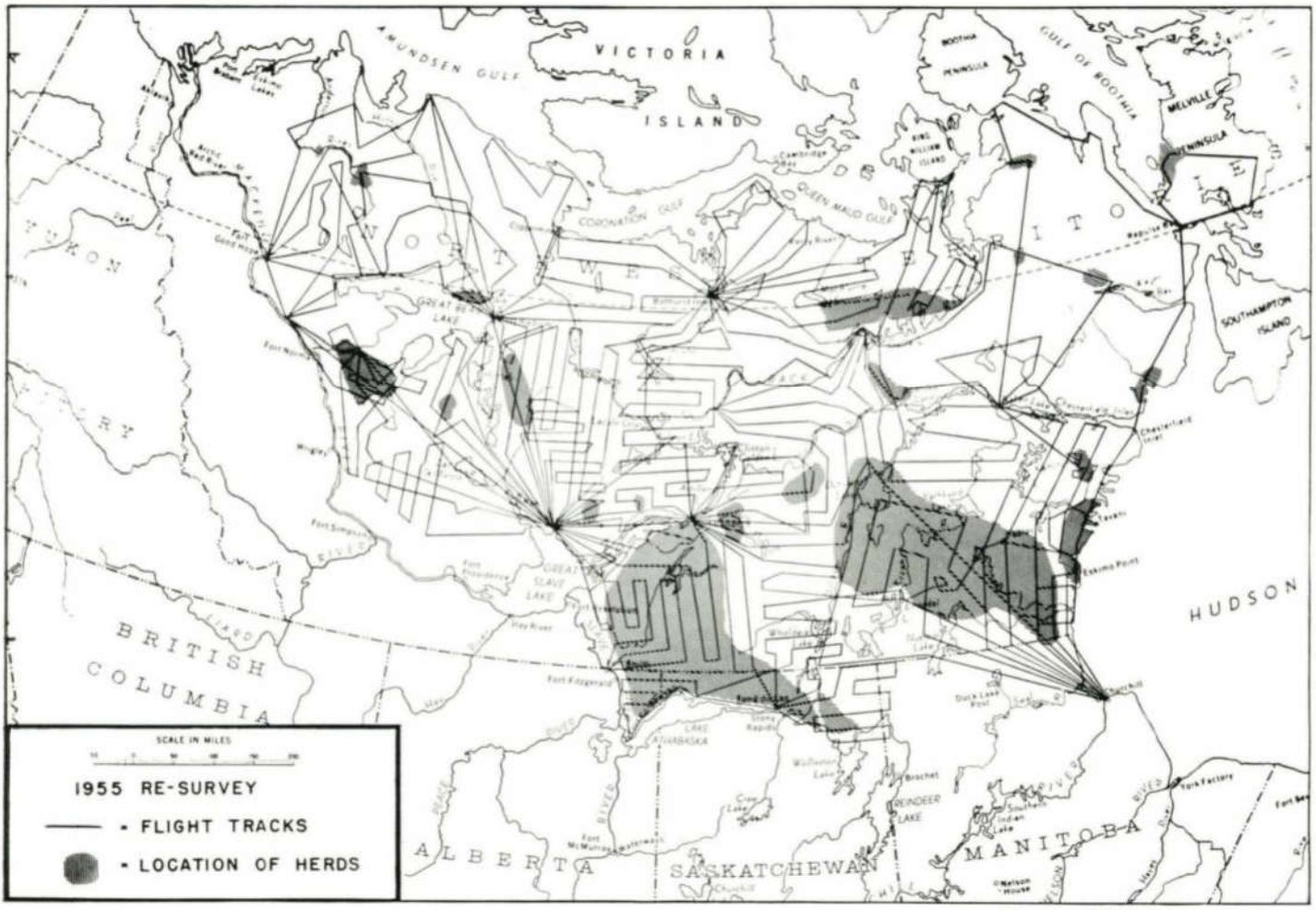
By A. W. F. Banfield

THE barren-ground caribou is an important natural resource of northern Canada. The "deer"—as it is called by many northerners—is a vital factor in the economy of approximately 25,000 Indians, Eskimos and white settlers living in the Yukon and Northwest Territories and in northern Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and Labrador. In these areas, remote from supplies of domestic meat, the caribou is a staple item of diet. The hide provides sleeping robes and winter clothing not yet surpassed for insulation and lightness by manufactured fabrics. The back sinews may be used as thread, the fat as lamp fuel, and the antlers to make tool handles.

The first Europeans to visit the tundra and forests of northern Canada were impressed by the innumerable herds of caribou which they encountered. The earliest detailed account of the life history, migrations, and native use of the caribou was given by Samuel Hearne, in reporting upon his epic trek overland from Prince of Wales's Fort to the Coppermine River, in 1770 to 1772. The species was first described for science by Sir John Richardson in 1829. He based his description upon information personally gathered during the first two Franklin expeditions. These reports formed the backbone of our knowledge of this animal, and little more was added for more than a century.

The great herds of caribou which roamed the arctic tundra during this period were frequently compared in numbers to the bison, or American buffalo, of the great plains. The writings of northern explorers contain many

Dr. Banfield, chief mammalogist of the Canadian Wildlife Service, has made a special study of the caribou population.



Canadian Wildlife Service

interesting accounts of the dependence of northern natives and explorers upon this natural resource.

The bison has long since vanished from its plains habitat except for a few herds in national parks, but the caribou still occurs in numbers suggestive of those that greeted the first explorers. In some regions, such as northern Quebec, Labrador and Baffin Island, the decline in numbers has brought hardship to the natives. The disappearance of the caribou over the whole of its continental range would be a serious blow to northern development and economy. Because of the expense involved in importing domestic food supplies, large areas of the central tundra regions of Canada could become uninhabitable for trappers and prospectors.

Because of its nomadic habits, the remoteness of its range, and the sparseness of the human population, many legends concerning the habits and migrations of the caribou have sprung up. Even today, these find supporters in isolated northern camps. One of these legends is that the caribou population is inexhaustible. On the contrary, recent investigations have shown that it can be easily depleted.

Naturalists have estimated the total number of caribou in the Northwest Territories in early times. These estimates have run as high as 100 million. One of the most popular estimates was made by E. T. Seton. He estimated 30 million caribou after his trip to the "arctic prairies" in 1907. A more reliable estimate was made by Dr. R. M. Anderson, of the National Museum, in 1938. He based his calculations upon the carrying capacity of the arctic tundra and his knowledge of the total caribou range. His estimate was two and one-half million caribou between Hudson Bay and the Mackenzie Valley.

With the increased post-war tempo of development in Canada's arctic and sub-arctic regions, fears regarding the fate of this important big game species were expressed. Recognizing the urgent need for an intensive investigation, federal and provincial authorities undertook a co-operative survey in 1948 and 1949. It was my privilege to lead this preliminary caribou investigation. A considerable amount of information had accumulated over a period of almost 200 years, dealing largely with local occurrence and life history, and this was available in the accounts of exploration, departmental files, wardens' reports, and R.C.M.P. patrol reports. Caribou questionnaires and native game returns had been distributed by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources since 1934.

It was soon realized that because of the immensity of the area to be investigated, aircraft must be used as a survey tool as well as a means of transportation. Previous attempts to estimate the caribou population had been handicapped because the workers could reach only one or two localities.

Aerial survey was found to be a particularly useful means of studying caribou migrations and populations. The population is not evenly dispersed over the whole range, but

is concentrated into herds on separate ranges. During the spring migration the herds travel in closely packed columns. They tend to follow frozen lakes and rivers. Since they frequently bed down on snow-covered lakes on sunny afternoons, they are easily observed and counted from the air at that time. Fresh tracks in the snow are usually sighted before the animals are and may be used as a guide in locating the animals. Old trails, feeding holes, and beds in the snow provide indications of previously occupied winter ranges. Caribou are observed on the tundra more easily than in the forest. Therefore, we tried to cover the migration about the time the animals were leaving the timber-line during April and May.

The aerial caribou counts were obtained by the following method. Reconnaissance flights were made over the caribou range at about 500 feet. When a herd was discovered the range was quartered to outline the length and breadth of the area occupied. Two observers counted the caribou observed in strips a quarter-mile wide on each side of the aircraft. The total herd population was then estimated on the basis of the number seen in the sample strips. This method has been tested in British Columbia and Alaska. Simultaneous air and ground counts of big game have indicated that such aerial surveys are fairly dependable, but they tend to be about 20 per cent low.

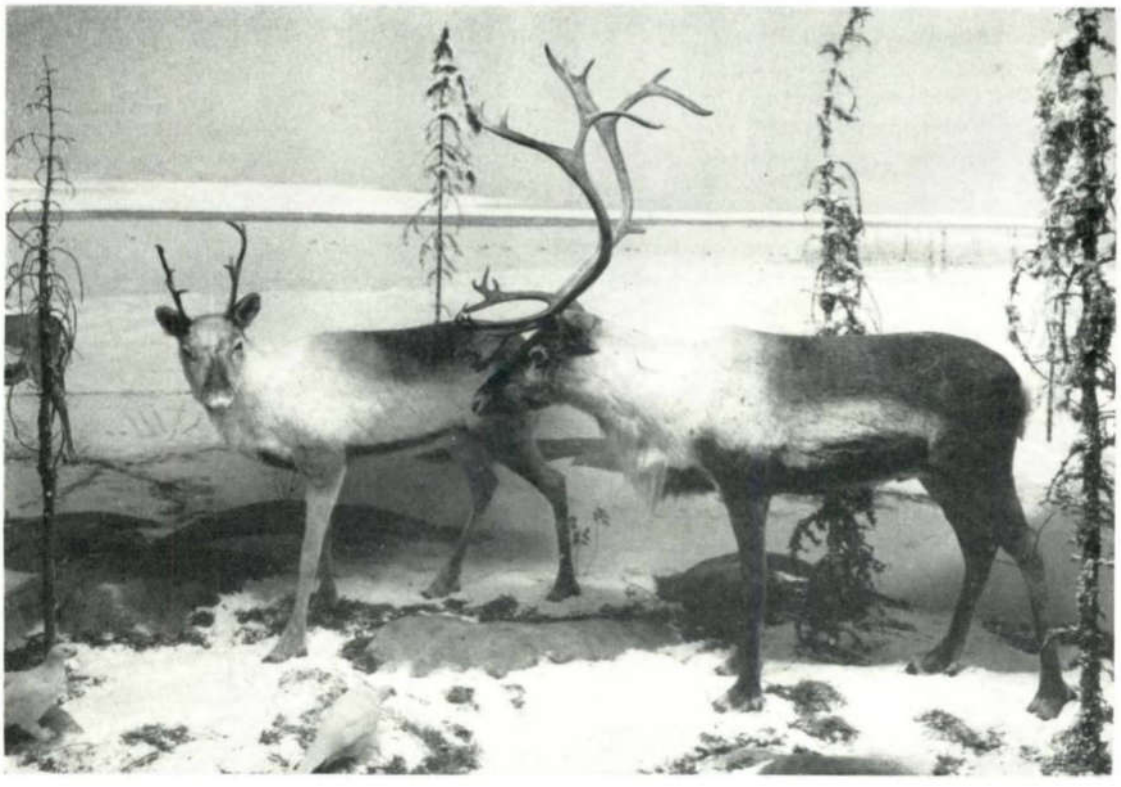
We also took several hundred aerial photographs of caribou herds from low elevations. These photographs were later studied under microscope in the laboratory. Our aerial counts were checked against the photographs for accuracy. The age and sex composition of the herds was also determined from the photographs. After one has become familiar with the appearance of the various ages of caribou on the ground, they can be separated without too much difficulty in good photographs. We have conducted tests at Churchill, Manitoba, and found close agreement between the counts of calves made from aerial photographs and simultaneous counts made from the ground observation of passing herds. From the aerial photographs, estimates of the annual crop of calves were made.

Besides these extensive aerial observations, intensive research was undertaken at a series of ground stations throughout the caribou range at various seasons in order to supplement and verify aerial observations.

The caribou population in 1949 was estimated to be 670,000 animals on the continent between Hudson Bay and the Mackenzie Valley. The annual crop of calves was estimated to be about 145,000 and the annual kill of caribou was estimated to be about 100,000 animals divided by groups as follows: by Indians 50,000, by Eskimos 30,000, by other trappers and hunters 20,000. Wolf predation was thought to account for a maximum 34,000 animals annually. Losses caused by disease, accidents, and weather might account for another 34,000. These mortality figures totalled 178,000 animals, resulting in a deficit of about 33,000 animals per year.

Following this preliminary survey, J. P. Kelsall of the Canadian Wildlife Service was stationed permanently at Yellowknife, N.W.T., in 1950. He undertook more detailed studies of the fawning habits and food requirements of several herds in the vicinity of his headquarters.

While his investigations continued additional surveys were conducted in other parts of arctic Canada. In 1953, a survey of the northern Yukon Territory caribou herd was undertaken with the co-operation of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska. This survey indicated a population of about 25,000 to 30,000 caribou north of



Barren ground caribou doe and stag in the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History.

the Ogilvie Mountains. An aerial survey of Baffin Island in 1954 indicated a population there of some 5,000 caribou. The same year a preliminary survey was conducted in northern Quebec with the co-operation of the Quebec Department of Game and Fisheries, and indicated a caribou population of about 5,000 in the Ungava Peninsula.

As six years had elapsed since the original survey, a complete re-survey of the central area was undertaken during the spring of 1955. Fourty-four thousand miles were flown on the re-survey in the Mackenzie District and twelve thousand miles in Keewatin District and Saskatchewan. This was greater coverage than that obtained in the initial survey. Most of the total range of the caribou between Hudson Bay and the Mackenzie Valley was covered in strips fifteen to twenty miles apart. Since the flight tracks were at right angles to the direction of migration, we consider it unlikely that any significantly large herds were missed. While a substantial margin of error must be accepted in dealing with remote animal populations, we are satisfied that the original census figures and the new ones are sufficiently accurate to form an adequate basis for assessing the situation.

The results of the re-survey were alarming. Only about 39,000 caribou were observed during the re-survey compared with approximately 350,000 observed in the initial survey. Kelsall's final calculations indicate that the present caribou population is about 277,000 animals. This is a decline of some 60 per cent during the last six years. The decline has been greatest in the Mackenzie District. The herds north of Great Bear Lake have dropped from about 35,000 to about 5,000. Between Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes there has been a decline approximately from 220,000 to 59,000. A similar decrease has occurred in the herds normally wintering between Great Slave and Athabasca Lakes from 250,000 to 42,000, but about 12,000 caribou wintered on the western tundra in 1955 where only 500 were estimated in 1949. Only in Keewatin District did the caribou population appear to hold its own. An estimated 172,000 caribou were on northward migration in 1955. This compares favourably with my estimate of 164,000 in 1948. Unfortunately these two figures are not strictly comparable as the Manitoba herds were joined by an undetermined number from the Lake Athabasca region.

Although a drop in the caribou population had been expected from the preliminary survey the actual decline exceeded the expected one by about 50 per cent.

Under such conditions one would expect to hear reports of hardship among the natives and isolated white trappers. And in the past few winters an increasing number of such reports have been received. The Fort Rae Indians have found it increasingly difficult to obtain their caribou requirements. During the winter of 1953-54, a mercy flight was made to Perry River carrying supplies of buffalo meat. Last winter Eskimo camps in the vicinity of Bathurst Inlet and Contwoyto Lake suffered extreme hardship when the autumn caribou migration failed to appear. They lost most of their dogs from starvation. In this desperate situation some Eskimos were forced to kill a number of protected musk-oxen to survive.

What is the reason for the caribou population decline? Let us examine some of the factors which may be responsible. There have been poor calf crops in about three of the years since 1950. During the preliminary investigation the average autumn calf count was about 20 per cent of the total herds. During the years of 1950 and 1951, the calf crops have been as low as seven to nine per cent. The calf crop of 1952 was remarkably high at 28 per cent, but it seems that this was not sufficient to offset the earlier losses. Unfortunately, the small numbers born in the poor years now form the important breeding classes of the population.

There were reports of caribou mortality from disease in central Keewatin during the summer of 1954, but upon inquiry it appeared that most of the losses were caused by drowning in the Thelon River. Losses of large numbers of migrating caribou in this river were reported as long ago as 1929 by an R.C.M.P. patrol. Caribou found dead away from the shores showed symptoms suggesting some well known animal diseases, such as lump jaw, but these do not generally cause animal mortality of epidemic proportions. Also, since the reports have concerned the Keewatin herds, which have declined least, we do not think disease has been an important factor in the present decline.

"Caribou must continue to supply the basic needs of food and clothing for natives and white residents in remote areas." R. Harrington

A strange trek of Banks Island caribou to the mainland during the winter of 1952-53 is still unexplained. Small herds were reported to have crossed the seventy-five mile frozen strait between Banks Island and the mainland only to perish along the shore. The observed high mortality and scarcity of fawns among these herds suggest a failure of the food supply. Range studies on the central tundra, however, have not shown any scarcity of food. Large forest fires have occurred on the winter ranges, but these have not been extensive enough to cause such a drastic decline.

Our studies have shown that late winter blizzards during May and June may cause severe losses among new born fawns. However, there is not enough information on hand to determine whether the observed losses were due to these blizzards in recent years.

This leaves us with two important caribou destruction factors to consider—predation and human utilization. These are factors which we can manipulate to some extent. Northerners know well the toll which the wolf takes from the caribou herds in its domain. Predation, however, is not a simple thing. Many factors such as population pressures, range conditions, weather and disease must be taken into the picture. We must not delude ourselves by laying the entire blame for the caribou decline upon the wolf. It should be remembered that large caribou herds existed in the past in spite of a relatively uncontrolled wolf population. Now when the caribou are becoming scarcer, however, we covet every caribou taken by a wolf. Increased control is called for to relieve the predator pressure upon the caribou herds. The federal and provincial governments are increasing their control programs in the north country. Skilled hunters are being employed, and poisoned baits are being distributed in winter on large lakes. These methods have been proved to be effective in the control of wolves. Much valuable biological information on the wolves is gathered during the spring mop-up flights when the baits and wolf carcasses are destroyed.

Finally, the effect of human utilization must be considered. Unfortunately, we don't have accurate figures on the utilization of caribou over its entire range in northern Canada. At best we have estimates for some posts for certain years. More information is urgently needed for the proper management of this natural resource. There is no question that the caribou must continue to supply the basic needs of food and clothing for natives and white residents in remote areas. However, it is of vital importance that human utilization be brought to the minimum compatible with basic requirements until such time as the caribou herds show strong recovery. A. G. Loughrey found that the combined native kill of caribou reported in Keewatin District and Manitoba during the winter 1954-55 amounted to twelve per cent of the estimated caribou population. At the same time the calf crop was thirteen per cent. When the losses due to predation, disease and accidents were added, he found a nine per cent deficit in the herds. This situation prevails generally across the caribou range.

Many writers have scored the wastage of caribou by Eskimos and Indians throughout the years. Instances of this have been observed during the recent investigations. Orgies of killing still take place at several crossing points where caribou are speared from canoes or kyaks as they cross lakes in crowded ranks. Each year thousands of caribou carcasses are abandoned—their bloated bodies crowding the shores of northern lakes whose waters flowed red a few days before. At other points men, women, and children pepper the passing columns with small-calibre rifle slugs. Little effort is made to salvage the carcasses of those that escape from the scene of shooting and die of their wounds. During the summer months, caribou meat is often abandoned after the hides have been stripped from the carcasses for clothing. During the autumn hunts, a few sods or stones tossed on the carcasses are often dignified by the term "cache." In some areas of Keewatin the head is merely twisted so the antlers will stick up through the snow. These caches are easily plundered by scavengers such as wolves, foxes and wolverines. Often they are not revisited when the trapper travels in a different direction.

This is a practice which northern people must take the lead in curbing. Government legislation cannot effectively prevent wastage in the remote areas of northern Canada. Restoration of the caribou can only be accomplished through an enlightened and aggressive program of conservation education, which will bring home to each hunter his own responsibility to conserve the resources of the land. Such a program should emphasize long term conservation and it must reach not only the children but the present day hunters or we may have few caribou for the children to hunt.

Government policy has already set aside the caribou for the benefit of northerners by the prohibition of non-resident sport hunting in the caribou range. If the resource is to be maintained, the number to be taken should now be restricted to the actual need.

There are some who say that the caribou is doomed in any case in the course of northern development, and that we should not concern ourselves with its fate. But this need not happen, for in Alaska caribou are increasing under proper management. Land areas of tundra and stunted spruce forest can best be utilized in raising these animals adapted to living on arctic and sub-arctic vegetation.

Therefore this natural resource should be properly managed to yield food and clothing for future Canadians who will occupy the land. Caribou husbandry is not tedious work. Given adequate protection and herd management the migratory caribou can supply annually approximately three million pounds of good meat delivered free in many areas of northern Canada. In addition possibly 25,000 hides could be utilized for clothing and sleeping robes. All this bounty would be produced without the work of feeding, herding, corralling, or sheltering the stock. Considering the cost of domestic meat and winter clothing in northern Canada, one can appreciate the value of this natural resource. That is why the people of the north should be vitally concerned over the caribou crisis. ◆

The Frobisher crest.

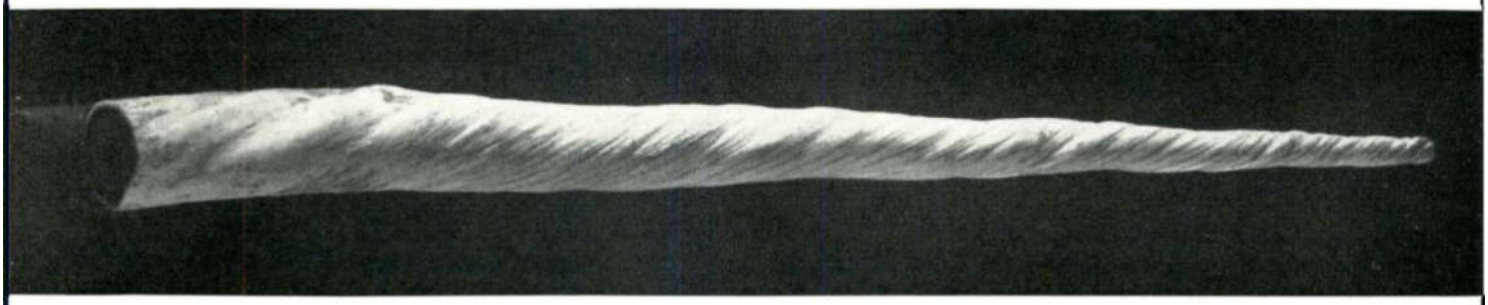
by THOMAS DUNBABIN

Author, and Australian press representative in Canada, Mr. Dunbabin has made a study of Canadian historical byways.

Narwhals are hunted by the Eskimos. This Eskimo holds two fine narwhal tusks. The tusk is an elongated tooth, developed by the male.

Richard Harrington.

The tip of this narwhal tusk was sent to the Earl of Leicester when in 1576 he demanded the New College unicorn horn as an antidote to poison.
Courtesy the Warden, New College, Oxford



CANADA'S HORN OF THE UNICORN

HAD the Hudson's Bay Company been formed ninety years earlier its charter might have required it to present a horn of the unicorn to the sovereign instead of two elks and two black beavers. A sea unicorn of the Canadian seas did yield the "treasure of his brow" to Queen Elizabeth I in 1578.

This treasure was found on an August day in 1577 in an inlet of Frobisher Bay on the southeastern shore of Baffin Land. Its discovery is thus recorded by Dionyse Settle in his account of the second northwestern voyage of Martin Frobisher:

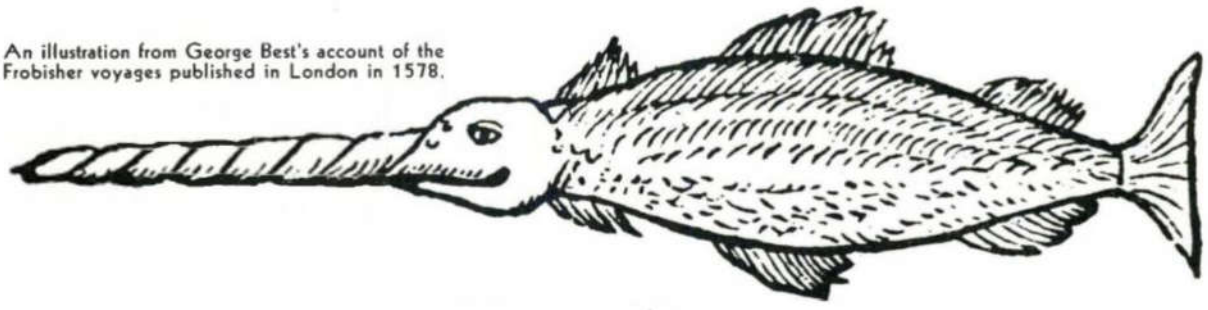
"On this West shoare we found a dead fishe floating, whiche had in his nose a horn streight & torquet [twisted], of lengthe two yardes lacking two ynches, being broken in the top, where we might perceiue it hollowe, into which some of our Saylers putting Spiders, they presently dyed. I sawe not the tryall hereof but it was reported vnto me of a trueth: by the vertue whereof, we supposed it to be the sea Unicorne."

This was no doubt the horn or tusk of a narwhal, a mottled whale that has a tusk from six to eight feet long projecting in front of its nose. The expression "streight and torquet" aptly describes the horn of the narwhal. It sticks straight out but it has a spiral, left-handed twist that marks it out from all other horns and tusks. The death of the spiders was no doubt attributed to the widely-famed anti-venom virtues of the horn of the unicorn. Telling of his adventures amongst the cannibals and Portuguese of Brazil, Anthony Knivet, who had sailed for the South Seas with Thomas Cavendish in 1591, says:

"At this town all our men both Indians and Portugals fell sick by eating of a kind of sweet pleasant fruit that was poison and had it not been for a gentleman called Enefrio de Say [Sa], my Master's Kinsman, who had a piece of Unicornes horn we had all died."

The unicorn's horn from Baffin Land was taken to England, along with a great quantity of "fools' gold," and given to the Queen, as a treasure of the realm.

An illustration from George Best's account of the Frobisher voyages published in London in 1578.



In a side-note to the account of William Baffin's 1615 voyage to Baffin Bay in search of the Northwest Passage, Samuel Purchas, who died in 1626, wrote: "The horn is still kept in the Robes at Windsor (where I have seen it), near seven feet long and cressed." If this was really the horn from Frobisher Bay there is a discrepancy in the size, since Settle says that that horn was five feet ten inches long. An attempt may have been made to supply the missing point that had been broken off before the Frobisher horn was found.

Perhaps narwhal horns were a glut in the market by 1615 or doubts about their values and virtues had begun to spread. At any rate Baffin had his doubts. In a letter to John Wolstenholme, one of the chief backers of the voyage, Baffin speaks of whales and "sea morse" (walruses) and goes on:

"As for the Sea Unicorne, it being a great fish having a long horn or bone, growing forth of his forehead or nostril (such as Sir Martin Frobisher in his second [? third] voyage found one) in divers places we saw of them, which, if the horne be of any good value, no doubt but many of them may be killed."

One of those who shared Anthony Knivet's views about the value of the unicorn's horn as a talisman against, or an antidote to, poison was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Queen Elizabeth's favourite at the time of Frobisher's voyage. Poisoning was an occupational risk to rulers, princes, potentates, and prelates in a period when poison was reputedly an instrument of statecraft. Those who felt themselves so threatened were extremely keen to guard themselves by the virtues of the unicorn's horn. You did not need to have a whole horn; segments and shavings were believed to possess the property. Even before Queen Elizabeth received the spider-destroying horn from Baffin's Bay Leicester had taken precautions against poisoning. In 1576 he demanded from the Warden and Fellows of New College, Oxford, the notable unicorn horn in their possession. They compromised by sawing off the tip and sending it to Leicester. The truncated horn is still in the muniments room of New College. Like the Queen's horn it is the horn of a narwhal.

The spider test was repeated in London under more scientific auspices only nine years before the granting of the Hudson's Bay Company Charter. But this time the spiders were but little affected.

When George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, was admitted to the Royal Society on 5th June, 1661, he promised to give the Society a piece of unicorn's horn. Six weeks later he presented it. The scientists powdered some of the horn, made a circle on the floor and put a spider in the centre. The spider scurried out of the circle. The experiment was repeated several times, with the same result. However it was noted that once the spider "made some stay on the powder."

For centuries before the days of Elizabeth and Leicester odd narwhal horns from the northern seas had been brought to Europe by the Norwegians of Iceland and presumably also of Greenland in the days when the Norse colonists there were in touch with the outer world. There is nothing to show when this trade began and very little evidence about the conditions in which it was carried on. Othere, the Norseman, who had sailed beyond the North Cape of Norway and had explored the White Sea told King Alfred the Great (849-901) that he had hunted the narwhal as well as the walrus in those arctic waters, and perhaps the tusk that he showed the king as proof of what he said was a narwhal horn rather than a walrus tusk.

The trade in unicorn horns from the Greenland Sea must have been well established by 1242. Icelandic records say that in that year a ship carrying a cargo of unicorn horns was wrecked on the coast of Iceland at a place that came to be called the Pool of Blood. It is recorded that each of the horns bore the private mark of the seaman to whom it belonged.

The narwhal is confined to the far northern seas, within or near the Arctic Circle. In earlier days it may have been found farther south. Walruses were once common in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In any case voyages to the arctic seas go back a long way. When Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) became king of Egypt in 285 B.C. the coronation procession included a great white bear. If this were a polar bear, as seems likely, it may have come from Iceland or Greenland. Or it may have come from Bear Island or Spitzbergen. Men who went far enough to capture a polar bear might well see narwhals.

Belief in the unicorn goes back long before the days of the Ptolemies. But the unicorns of those days were thought of as land animals and were believed to exist in the remoter regions of Asia and Africa. Ctesias, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, wrote of the Asian unicorns. Later Cosmas Indicopleustes, the merchant of the sixth century A.D. who turned monk after he had sailed to India, wrote of the unicorns of Abyssinia, though he had not actually seen them.

One genuine unicorn that may have been vaguely known to the civilized world before any narwhal horns had drifted down from the dim North was the one-horned rhinoceros. This gross and clumsy beast was, however,

very unlike the graceful and noble unicorn of legend. The Portuguese did business in rhinoceros horns after they had found the seaway to India. As princely treasures these stumpy affairs made a poor showing if compared with the great spirally twisted horn of the narwhal.

As discovery advanced the unicorn was relegated to more and more remote regions of the Old World. The finding of America provided a whole New World in which Europeans might place unicorns. On the whole they were reasonably restrained in their speculations on the subject.

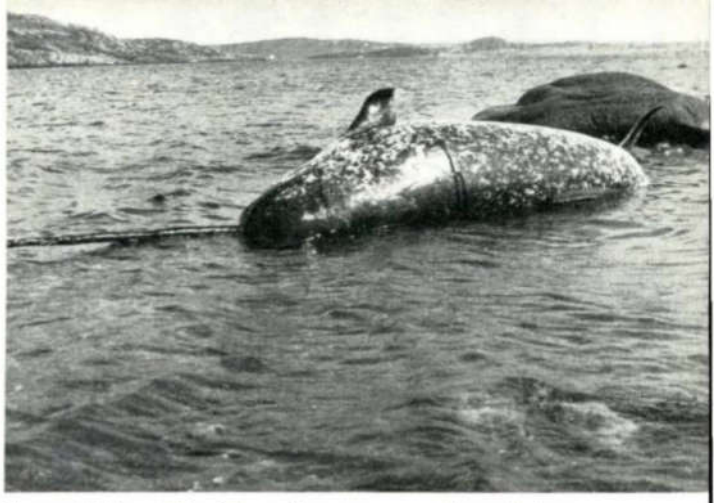
When Friar Marco of Nice, a man of vivid imagination went northward from Mexico in 1539 to seek for the Seven Cities of Cebola he came to Indians who showed him "a hide half as big again as the hide of an Ox and said that it was the skin of a Beast which had but one Horn upon his forehead, bending towards his breast, and that out of the same goeth a point forward with which he breaks any thing that he runneth against." No doubt this was a buffalo-hide.

At any rate Vasquez de Coronado found no unicorns when he came north in 1540 and pushed far into what is now the United States. In the pueblo country of New Mexico he noted the existence of "certain sheep as big as horses, with very great horns and little tails." And when he pushed on across the prairies towards the Missouri river he found the plains "as full of hunch-backed Kine as Serena in Spain of sheep."

When John Hawkins touched upon the coast of Florida a quarter of a century later his men brought back reports that there were unicorns in those parts. Their belief was based on a neat but fallacious bit of logic. They mistakenly thought that there were lions in Florida. And as there were lions there must be unicorns, since the unicorn was the natural enemy and, as it were, the complement of the lion, as witness the present Royal Coat-of-Arms. Still later a map of North America, issued in Amsterdam, showed a fine unicorn in Canada. This creature appears in what is now New Brunswick, just north of the present Maine border.

This map was published after Frobisher's men had found the horn of the unicorn in the waters of Baffin Land. Belief in the existence of the land unicorn was widespread

James I brought the Scottish unicorn to the Royal arms. Earlier the supporter was a griffin. From a map of 1650.



The narwhal is a whale of the arctic waters. Henry Voisey.

in Europe until well into the 17th century. And people's confidence in the virtues and value of unicorn horns died hard. Whatever may have been the misgivings of William Baffin in 1615 about the worth of narwhal horns, Charles I, the melancholy monarch who came to the throne in 1625 and lost his head in 1649, paid a high price for a unicorn's horn. This was probably a narwhal horn.

The unicorn was indeed closely associated with the Stuarts. In the 15th and 16th centuries the Stuart rulers of Scotland coined "unicorns," small gold coins bearing the image of this fabulous animal, looking very like a horse with one long horn springing from its forehead. And since the Stuart dynasty, in the person of James I, came to rule in England, the Royal arms have had a lion and a unicorn facing each other as "supporters."

There is no reason to suppose that in the great days of the trade in narwhal horns the persons who finally bought the horns knew that they came from a sea beast. Indeed men learned in the lore of the unicorn were puzzled and suspicious when it came to be noised abroad that this was the case. The trade was in the hands of a few merchants who bought the horns from the seamen who hunted the narwhal. From the very nature of the business it was surrounded with secrecy and mystery.

In those days the Norwegians were subjects of the king of Denmark. It was only natural, therefore, that the king of Denmark had a famous "unicorn throne," made of narwhal horns. Christian IV, king of Denmark and Norway from 1588 to 1648, sent exploring expeditions to Greenland and into Hudson Bay. Perhaps narwhal horns had some place in his plans.

As long as the supply was small and the belief in the mystic value of unicorn horns was strong, narwhal tusks were a valuable commodity. Kings, potentates, and plutocrats in Western Europe and in Asia paid high prices for whole horns and lesser persons would buy pieces of them.

By the time that Charles II had recovered his father's crown the lure of the horn of the unicorn had begun to fade. The spread of scientific knowledge and the rise of rationalism was on the way to put the narwhal hunters out of business. The Dutch went on selling narwhal horns by the piece in the hermit kingdom of Japan for quite a while longer. But the heart had gone out of the trade. ◆

THE LIVING STONE

These stone carvings by Eskimos of the Eastern Arctic are part of the Hudson's Bay Company's collection. Most of them were specially chosen some two years ago by James Houston of the Department of Northern Affairs, but those on the last two pages are of more recent origin. The sketches are from Eskimo engravings on walrus tusks.

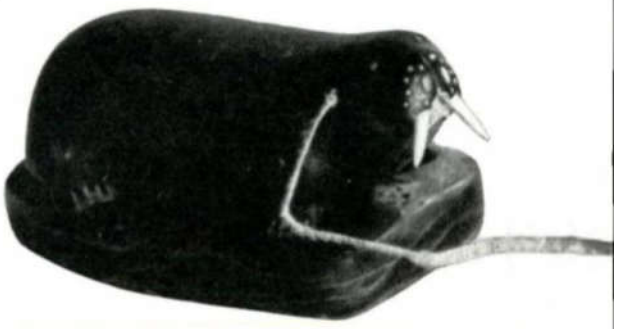
In Canada, the United States, and abroad, Eskimo sculptures continue to capture the interest of art connoisseurs and laymen, and although more and more are coming out of the Arctic each year, the supply is still far behind the demand.

Left: Windblown woman, by Akeeaktashook of Port Harrison.

Above: Eskimo drawing of a dance house.

Photographed by Paul Chipman.

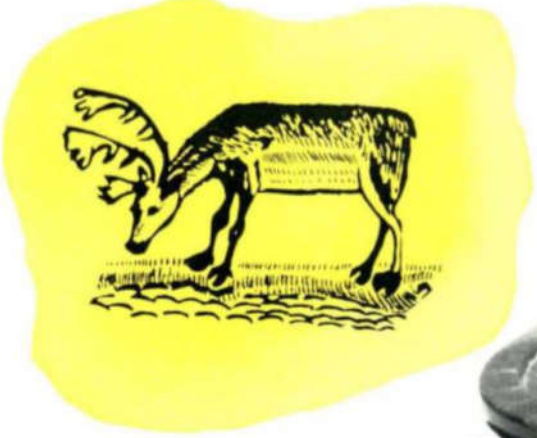
Bear attacking walrus.



THE LIVING STONE

Hunter with harpooned walrus.

Mother tending stone lamp.

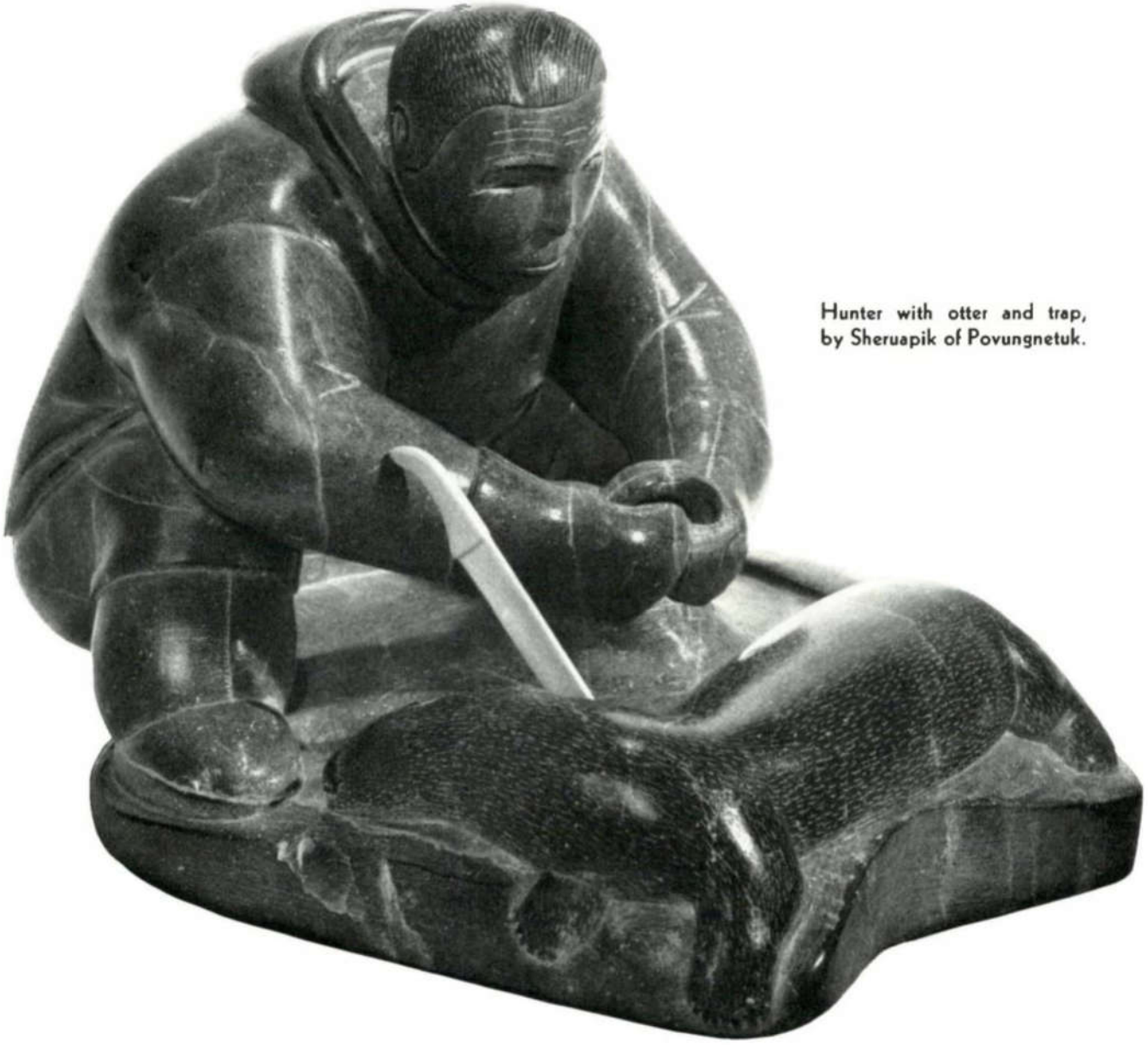


THE LIVING STONE

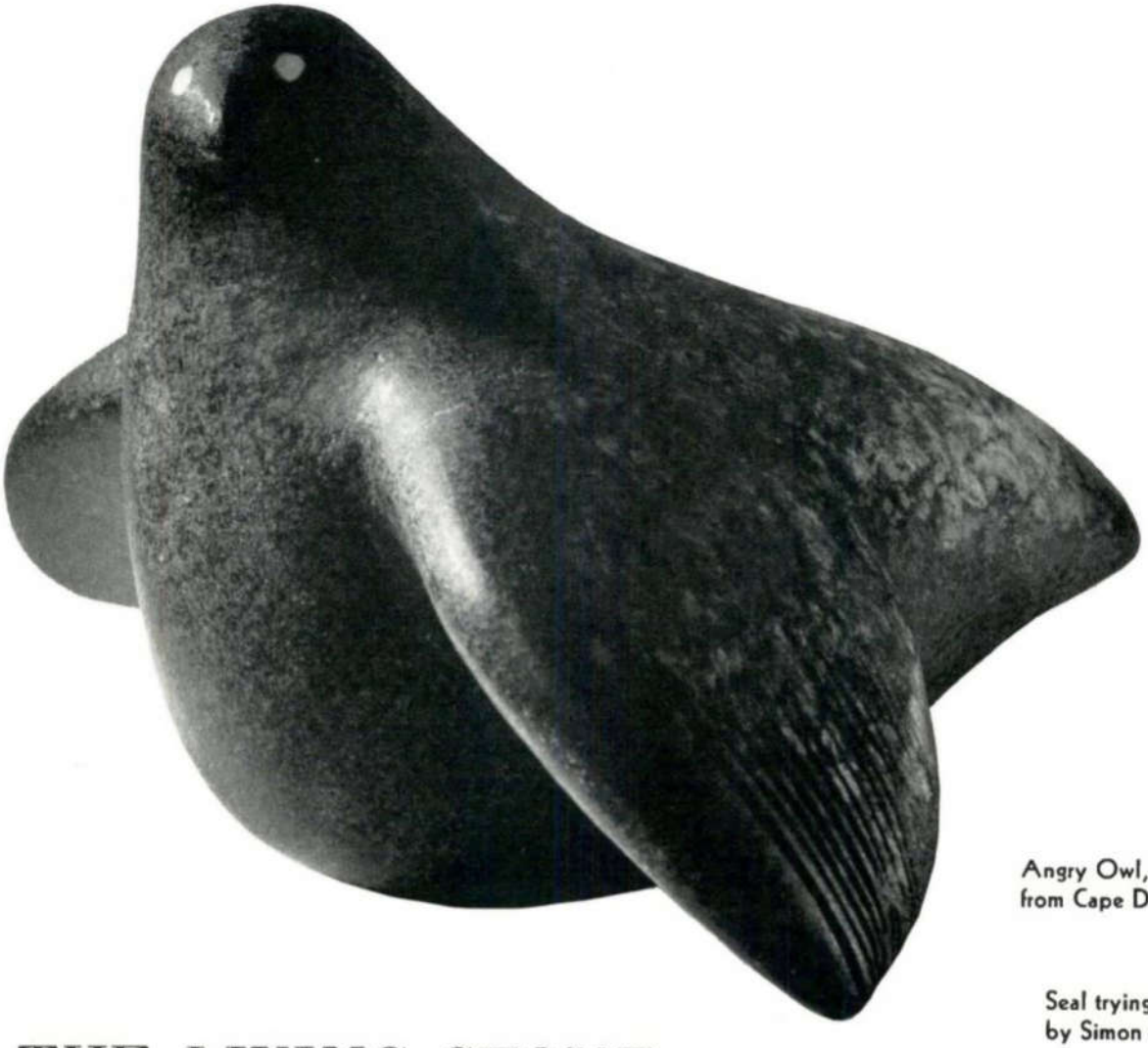
Opposite page: Women with children; hunter inflating sealskin float; mother using woman's knife (ooloo).

Bow-drill . . .
rib-bone bow,
vertebra mouthpiece.

Carving knife
set in antler handle.



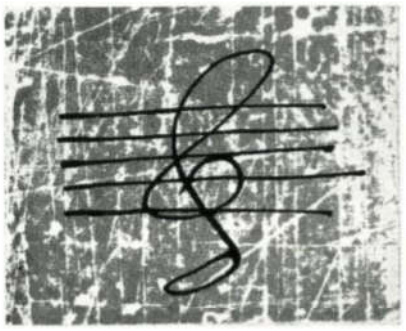
Hunter with otter and trap,
by Sheruapik of Povungnetuk.



Angry Owl,
from Cape Dorset.

Seal trying to escape,
by Simon of Cape Smith.

THE LIVING STONE



Pierre Falcon was a prairie singer whose songs have the flavour of the old fur trade. In this first of a series of articles, a prairie historian discusses two of them, one of which is published for the first time.

BARD OF THE PRAIRIES

by Margaret Arnett MacLeod

MANITOBA has seemed to have no heritage of folk songs from Red River days. After a search of some years however a few have been discovered and are presented in this series. We can find no songs left by the English-speaking settlers. Those offered here are in French with English translations. The only person of whom we can learn, who to any extent put the life of the country into verse, was Pierre Falcon. Since four, and possibly five, of these songs were composed by him, perhaps we might take a look at the man.

Pierre was the son of a North West Company clerk, also named Pierre, and his mother was a woman of the prairies. He was born at Elbow Fort in the Swan River District, on June 4th, 1793. In 1799 his father took him to La Prairie, Quebec, for education, and he did not return home to Fort Elbow until 1808 when he was fifteen. He then entered the North West Company as a clerk. In 1812 he married Mary Grant, a sister of Cuthbert Grant.

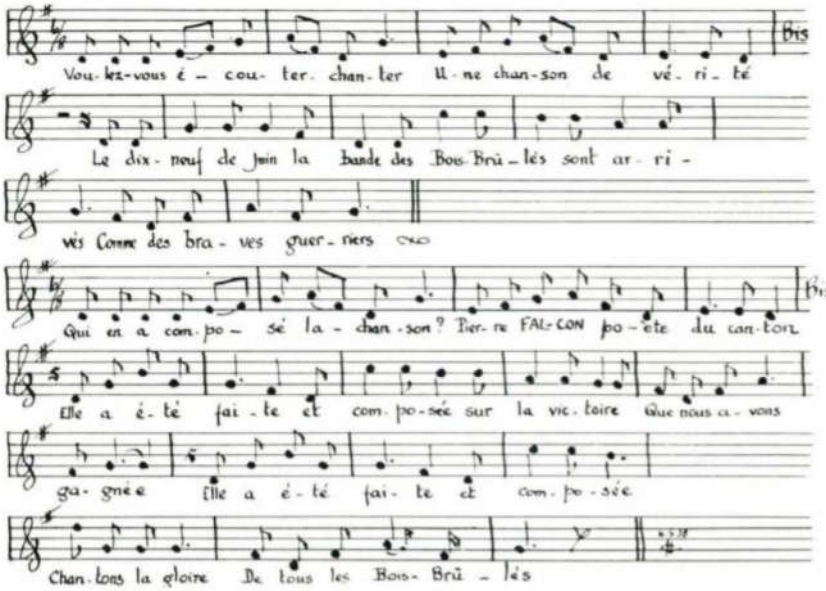
Pierre was a wiry, fiery little man, agile and quick of movement. He had the deeply tanned skin of the prairies and a sparse black beard, from under which, on occasion, streamed a flowing black tie. He wore his hair long to the base of his neck; not to conform with the style of the poets of his day, but in Red River fashion. He had a feeling for words, a sense of rhythm, and a love of a rollicking tune. He was strongly dramatic and his idea of the importance of the Métis nation may have been more right than his English contemporaries, or even we today, have been ready to concede. Everything in the world he knew, even the slightest event, went into verse and song, yet his work was not trivial. He mirrored the life about him and his songs were eagerly caught up by the voyageurs on their journeys to and from Montreal.

It is difficult for us to realize the monotony of these cross-country journeys—days, weeks, and months of paddling, relieved only by their songs; and at night, by their dances around the campfire. How they would hail a new song from Falcon when they reached the eastern edge of the prairies. Since no one else seems to have portrayed the Red River scene during Falcon's period it is an historical loss that the life work of this bard of the prairies was not preserved.

Tasse, the historian, predicted that as long as the Canadian folksong was sung, the echoes of Falcon's would be heard from the St. Lawrence to the Mackenzie.

Through his many songs he was known as "The Bard of the Prairie Métis." In fact he became such a noted figure that one of Manitoba's loveliest lakes, Falcon Lake, near the Ontario border, was named in his honour, a fitting recognition of the happy contribution he made to the life of his period.

In Pierre's time Falcon Lake lay near the Nor'westers' great cross-country canoe route. Today it borders another great cross-country route—one of concrete and motors—Canada's No. 1 highway. It seems a cynicism of fate that the fame of this singer of the plains should have died with him, and that the origin of the lake's name should also have been forgotten. For today Falcon Lake is known to us only as a popular summer resort.

From what can be learned of his life it would appear that Falcon's years as a clerk in the North West Company were spent in the Swan River and Qu'Appelle country. His post, Elbow Fort, was among a cluster of North West Company forts in the Swan River and Assiniboine valleys. The girl he married had lived at nearby Fort Tremblant, where her father Cuthbert Grant, Sr., a North West Company partner, was in charge. Their early married years were spent in this area, but in 1816 an historic event which occurred at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers brought him to that place for a short period. There, through his song, "The Battle of Seven Oaks," which he composed, he gained wide recognition.

Vou-lez-vous é - cou-ter chan-ter U-ne chan-son de vé-ri-té bis
Le dix-neuf de juin la bande des Bois-Brû-lés sont ar-ri-
vés Comme des bra-ves guer-riers
Qui en a com-po-sé la-chan-son? Pier-re FAL-CON po-ète du can-ton bis
Elle a é-té fai-te et com-po-sée sur la vic-toire Que nous a-vons
ga-gnée Elle a é-té fai-te et com-po-sée
Chan-tons la gloire De tous les Bois-Brû-lés

Falcon composed both words and music of this song, known in French as the "Chanson de la Grenouillere." This version was sung by his grandchildren as Falcon taught it to them, and taken down by Henry Caron, choirmaster of St. Mary's Cathedral, Winnipeg.

LA BATAILLE DES SEPT-CHENES

Voulez-vous écouter chanter } bis
Une chanson de vêritê?
Le dix-neuf juin, la bande des Bois-brûlés
Sont arrivés comme des braves guerriers.

En arrivant à la Grenouillère } bis
Nous avons fait trois prisonniers;
Trois prisonniers des Arkanys
Qui sont ici pour piller not' pays.

Etant sur le point de débarquer } bis
Deux de nos gens se sont écriés
Deux de nos gens se sont écriés
Voilà l'Anglais qui vient nous attaquer.

Tout aussitôt nous avons dévirê } bis
Avons été les rencontrer
J'avons cernê la band' des Grenadiers
Ils sont immobiles, ils sont tout démontês.

J'avons agi comme des gens d'honneur, } bis
J'avons envoyé un ambassadeur,
Le gouverneur, voulez-vous arrêter
Un petit moment, nous voulons vous parler?

Le gouverneur qui est enragé } bis
Il dit à ses soldats: Tirez!
Le premier coup c'est l'anglais qui a tiré,
L'ambassadeur ils ont manqué tuer.

Le gouverneur qui se croit empereur } bis
Il veut agir avec rigueur;
Le gouverneur qui se croit empereur
A son malheur, agit trop de rigueur.

Ayant vu passer tous ces Bois-brûlés } bis
Il a parti pour les épouvanter;
Etant parti pour les épouvanter;
Il s'est trompê, il s'est bien fait tuer.

Il s'est bien fait tuer } bis
Quantité de ses grenadiers
J'avons tuê presque tout son armée,
Sur la band' quatre ou cinq s'sont sauvés.

Si vous aviez vu tous ces Anglais } bis
Et tous ces Bois-brûlés après
De butte en butte les Anglais culbutaient,
Les Bois-brûlés jetaient des cris de joie.

Qui en a composé la chanson } bis
Pierre Falcon, poète du canton
Elle a êté faite et composée
Sur la victoire que nous avons gagnée.
Elle a été faite et composée
Chantons la gloire de tous les Bois-brûlés.

THE BATTLE OF SEVEN OAKS

Will you come and hear me sing
Of a true and recent thing?
On June nineteenth the Bois-brûlés
Arrived like warriors, brave and gay.

On coming to the Grenouillère
We took three Orkney prisoners there
Three men from across the sea
Who'd come to pillage our country.

As soon as we started to set out
Two of our comrades gave a shout,
Two of our men called out, "Alack!
There are the English, come to attack!"

At once we reined our horses in
And galloped back to meet them then,
Surrounding all their grenadiers
Who stood quite still, a prey to fears.

Like men of honour we did act,
Sent an ambassador, in fact,
Asking their governor to wait
And talk, before it was too late.

But the governor is full of ire
And forthwith tells his men to fire.
They fire the first—their muskets roar
And almost kill our ambassador!

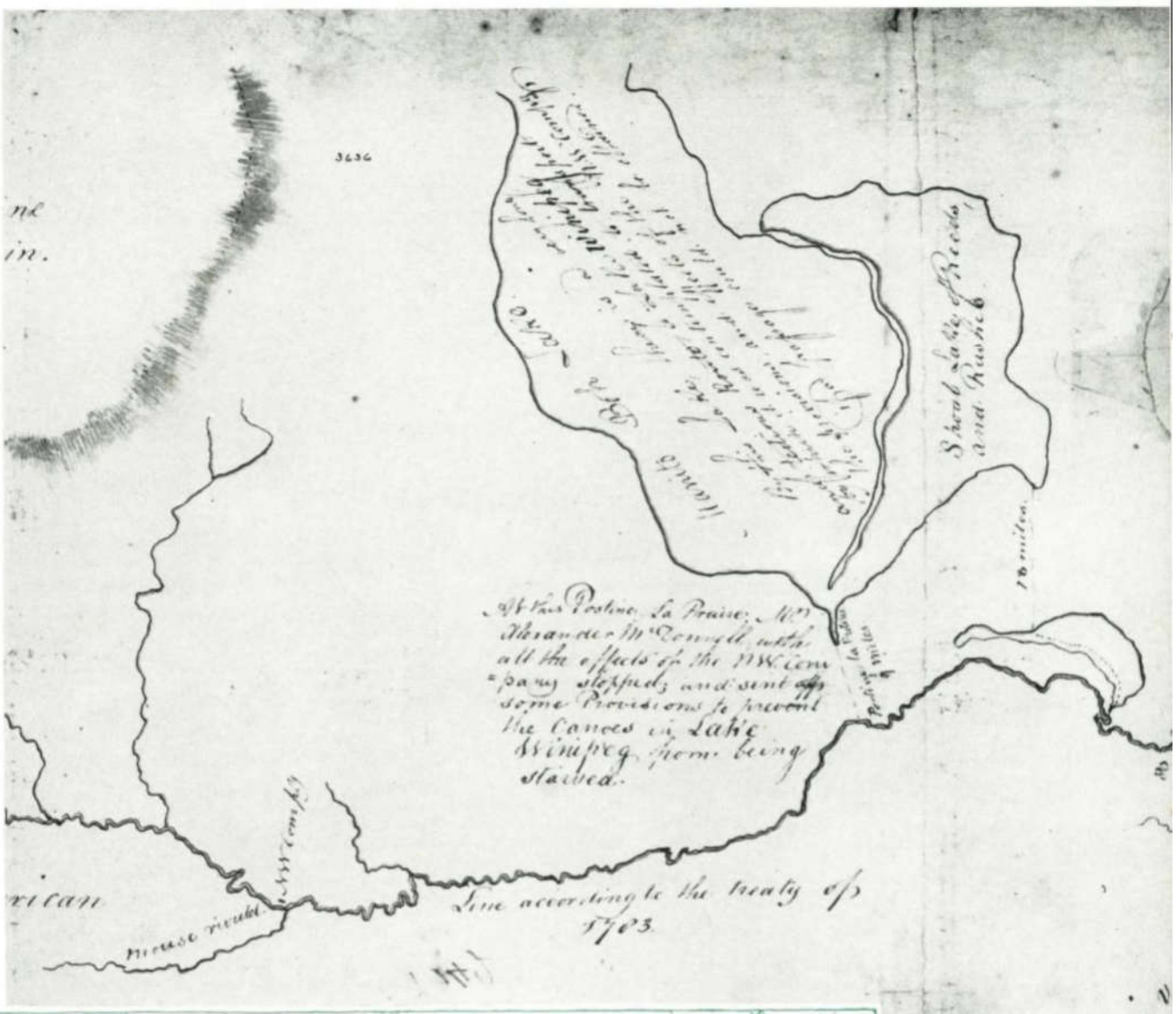
The governor thinks he's an emperor,
A proud and arrogant seignior.
He tries to act like a lofty lord
—And, to his grief, gets his reward!

When he espied the Bois-brûlés
He tried to frighten them away.
He sallied out to drive them away,
And for this mistake with his life did pay.

Because he behaved so arrogantly
Most of his grenadiers did die.
Almost all of his men were slain;
Only four or five got home again.

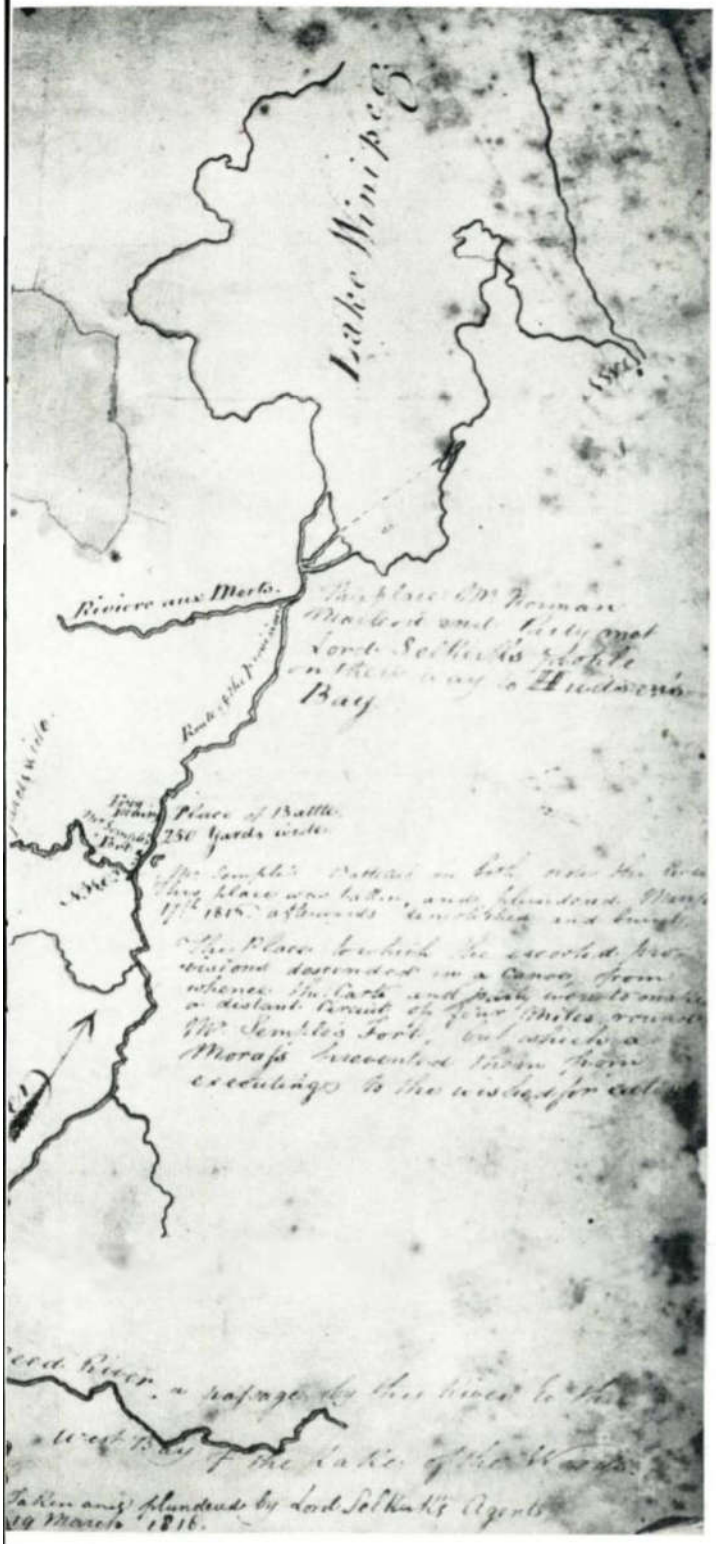
Ah, would you had seen those Englishmen,
And the Bois-brûlés a-chasing them!
One by one we did them destroy
While our Bois-brûlés uttered shouts of joy!

Now who is the singer of this song?
'Tis the local poet, Pierre Falcon.
He wrote the song and it was sung
To mark the victory we had won.
He wrote the song, that very day
To sing the praise of the Bois-brûlés!



The Battle of Seven Oaks was fought on the Frog Plain, in the northern part of what is now the city of Winnipeg.

C. W. Jeffreys Imperial Oil Collection



A hitherto unpublished map illustrating the Northwesters' side of the argument about the Battle of Seven Oaks. Briefly, Alex McDonnell sent some food down the Assiniboine to Fort Gibraltar "to prevent the canoes on Lake Winnipeg from being starved." From the fort it was to go north by carts making a wide sweep around Semple's fort, but the Frog morass forced them to pass near it.

McCord Museum, McGill University

At the forks of these rivers, five years previously, in 1811, the Hudson's Bay Company launched a scheme for settlement at its posts, and the enterprise was given over into the hands of Lord Selkirk. He was the logical choice, since some years before he had applied to the British Government without success for help in a similar venture at this location. The Company had chosen an inauspicious period to send out settlers; they landed at the forks of the two rivers in the midst of a fur trade war between the North West and Hudson's Bay companies.

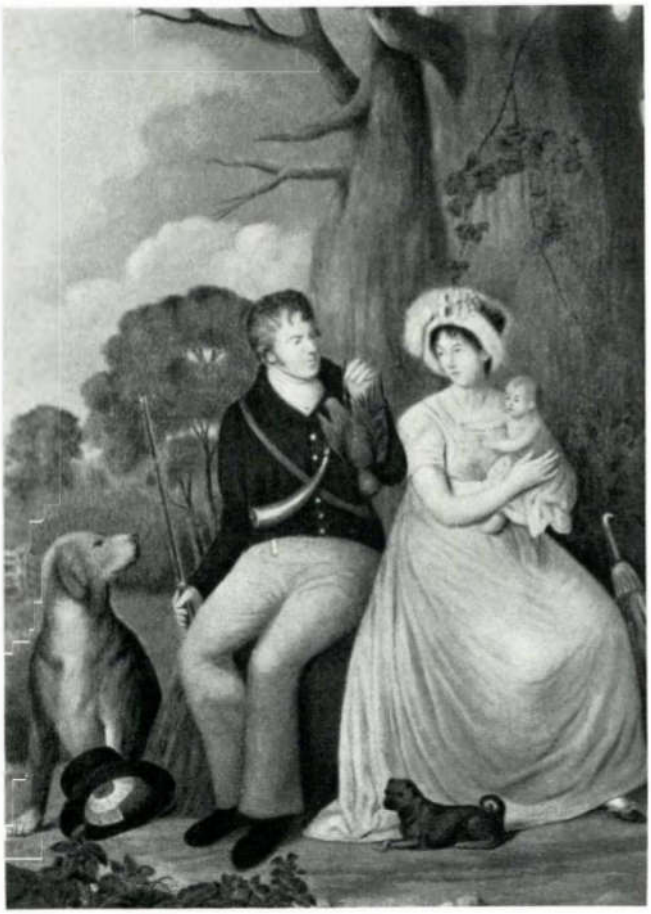
The ferocity of the Nor'westers was immediately directed against the Selkirk settlers, as well as the Company itself In 1815 they burned the new little settlement to the ground. There were grim reprisals; and the following year the Nor'westers made another attack on the rebuilt settlement. On June 19, 1816, a party of about one hundred under Cuthbert Grant was sent down the Assiniboine from the Qu'Appelle country to block the Red River below the colony. The Nor'westers had made Grant "Captain General of all the half-breeds." One band of the party made its way to Frog Plain (*La Grenouillère*), unseen. But a second band of some thirty men was seen by Semple, Governor of the colony, and intercepted by him and his men at Seven Oaks. There was an altercation; a shot—the colony men tried to form an extended line—then broke and huddled together. The half-breeds fired steadily from behind their horses into the mass. A swirl of horsemen came from behind the oaks, as the first band under Grant rode up from Frog Plain. The engagement grew more fierce, and at its end one member of the North West party, and nineteen of the colonists lay dead, while Governor Semple was mortally wounded. Thus ended the Battle of Seven Oaks, the site of which is marked today by a monument on Winnipeg's Main Street.

Falcon's name does not appear on the list of Grant's followers, but he was there, for Grant had ordered him from Souris Post to escort the provisions. Falcon also said that he saw the shooting of Semple, and that he composed his song on the evening of that day.

As for the sentiments expressed in the song, the historian Hargrave, who published an English version of the words in his *Red River*, considered that Falcon no doubt presented the opinion of the Nor'westers with regard to the intention of Semple and his men.

Hargrave also says that Falcon "neither reads nor writes," which is hard to believe when it is considered that he was brought up by his grandfather, a well-educated man, in Lower Canada, and that he was a clerk with the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies, as well as a magistrate of Assiniboia. But Hargrave must have known him in the Red River Settlement, for he writes about him in the present tense, and adds: "The song was taken down from his own lips for the purpose of the present publication."

A more recent discussion of the song, by Margaret Complin, will be found in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada for 1939, in which three versions of the music are given.



The situation with which the song deals was a common procedure in the fur trade war. On seizing an enemy fort each company's first consideration was to retain as many of the opposition's servants as possible. A dance to which they were all invited was held immediately. The hosts counted upon the loosened tongues of their riotous guests to reveal the secrets of the opposition.

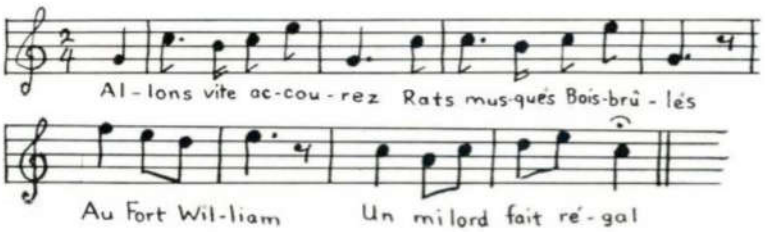
The Nor'westers' great hall at Fort William, with its oil paintings and statuary, was no doubt the scene of Lord Selkirk's ball, and he must have been pleased to find in the fur trade wilderness such a fine setting for it. Even some Wedgwood Queen's Ware was listed by "Milord" among the contents of the fort when he took it over.

The words of this song were obtained from the Vijon-Verreau collection in the Folklore Archives of Laval University. The *Air des Francs Maçons* to which it was originally sung has been lost, and the one presented here has been chosen by M. Luc Lacourciere, director of the Archives, and adapted to the song by Mr. Henry L. Caron, Choirmaster, St. Mary's Cathedral, Winnipeg.

William McGillivray, head of the North West Co., whom Selkirk arrested at Fort William, and who is mentioned in Falcon's song, opposite. From the painting by Dulongpre in the McCord Museum.

After the Battle of Seven Oaks, Cuthbert Grant seized Fort Douglas and banished the colonists from the Forks. Word sped to Lord Selkirk that again the settlement was wiped out. Falcon's song, *The Battle of Seven Oaks* was spread throughout the country by the Nor'westers, and a copy of the verses was sent to Lord Selkirk by his agent in Red River.

Lord Selkirk was on his way from Montreal to Red River. In Montreal he had rallied to his aid some members of a disbanded regiment and the news reached him at Sault Ste. Marie. He immediately proceeded to Fort William, where, in reprisal, he seized the Nor'westers' fort. Grant knew of Selkirk's coming and no doubt this reprisal was expected. Falcon, as Grant's right hand man, might have been sent to Fort William, or he could have learned the event recorded in the song from Nor'westers who were there. Though the composer of this song, *Lord Selkirk at Fort William*, has not been identified, M. Martial Allard, who has made an extensive study of Pierre Falcon and his work, considers that this song, judging by its vocabulary, use of words, and style, may have been composed by Falcon.

Simon Fraser, the celebrated explorer of the Fraser River, who is also mentioned in the song.
B.C. Archives

The words of this song were obtained from the Vijon-Verreau collection in the Folklore Archives of Laval University. The "Air des Francs Macons" to which it was originally sung has been lost. The one presented here has been chosen by M. Luc Lacourciere, director of the Archives, and adapted to the words by Mr. Caron.

LE LORD SELKIRK AU FORT WILLIAM

ou La Danse des Bois-brûlés

(Air des Francs-Maçons)

UN HERAUT

Allons, vite accourez
Rats-musqués, Bois-brûlés,
Au Fort William un Milord fait régal.

Allons donc dépêchez,
Vous saut'rez, vous dans'rez
Y a musique, et vous aurez beau Bal!

L'ORDONNATEUR

McNabbs, que McGil'oré
Entre nous soit placé;
Je veux qu'il brille en ce fameux régal:

Avec lui, retenez
Vous saut'rez, vous dans'rez
Y a musique; et vous aurez beau bal.

Allons gai, McKenzé,
Venez de ce côté,
Vous prendrez part à ce petit régal:

Et puis si vous l'voulez
Vous saut'rez, vous dans'rez
Y a musique et vous aurez bon bal.

Oh ça! Docteur, entrez
Ici vous asserez
Point d'humeur sombre en ce joyeux régal.

Docteur vous chanterez,
Vous saut'rez, vous dans'rez
Y a musique, et vous aurez beau bal!

Belle Troque! avancez
Ah! Fraser, un tel nez
Est bien celui d'un courrier de régal!

Cà, morbleu, vous boirez,
Puis après vous dans'rez;
Y a musique et vous aurez beau bal.

Cà, Meurons, accordez,
Préludez, commencez,
Et jouez-nous quelque air un peu jovial.

Messieurs les Bois-brûlés,
Vous saut'rez, vous chant'rez
Y a musique et vous aurez beau bal.

LES BOIS-BRULES

Que vous avez de bonté,
Milord! d'honnêteté!
Quand pourrons-nous vous rendre un tel regal?

MILORD

Allons, vous vous moquez,
Dansez, Matchicotés
Y a musique, et vous aurez bon bal!

LES BOIS-BRULES

Allons! point tant d'façon,
Sautons donc, dansons donc;
Que l'diable emport Milord et son régal.

Qu'avec tous ses Meurons
Sur leurs maudits violons
Cent ans durant il danse un pareil bal.

LORD SELKIRK AT FORT WILLIAM

or The Dance of the Bois-brûlés

Translated by Robert L. Walters

A HERALD

Come quickly, come today,
Rats-musqués, Bois-brûlés
At Fort William Lord Selkirk gives a Ball.

Now hurry, don't delay,
You'll sing and dance and play,
The band strikes up; there's food and fun for all.

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES

McNab, now all should see,
Our friend McGillivray[1].
He'll add distinction to our famous ball.

And you beside him stay,
You'll sing and dance and play.
The band strikes up, there's fun and food for all.

McKenzie[2], now take care,
Your place is over there.
Come join us all in our gay little ball.

And if you think you dare,
You'll dance at our affair.
The band strikes up; there's fun and food for all.

Oh, Doctor[3], come draw near.
Your chair is over here,
Bring no gloom here, we want none at our ball.

So, Doctor, here this day
We'll see you skip and play.
The band strikes up; there's fun and food for all.

Good Trader, join our dance.
There's Fraser's[4] nose; one glance
Tells us that he will like our little ball.

There see the drink flow free,
You'll dance abandonedly.
The band strikes up; there's food and fun for all.

Meurons, without delay,
Please play us something gay,
A lively tune to start our happy ball.

Respected Bois-brûlés
Just hop and jump and play
The band strikes up; there's fun and food for all.

THE BOIS-BRULES

My Lord, we now express
Our thanks for your kindness.
When can we traders give you such a ball?

LORD SELKIRK

Now men, your joking stop.
Just dance and slide and hop
The band strikes up; there's fun and food for all.

THE BOIS-BRULES

Formalities away!
We'll join the dance today.
Milord, his feast—the devil take it all!

And let *him* dance, we say,
While all his fiddles play,
A hundred years or more at such a ball!

1. Hon. William who was arrested at Fort William by John McNab on Selkirk's orders.
2. Either Kenneth or Alexander or Daniel
3. John McLoughlin 4. Simon, the explorer

Some personal notes on the explorer of the upper Finlay, whom Governor Simpson called

"THE STRANGEST MAN I EVER KNEW"

by R. M. Patterson

GOVERNOR George Simpson kept a "Character Book" in which he recorded, under code numbers to which he had the key, his opinions of the officers of the Company—opinions which had considerable bearing on their chances of promotion or otherwise. One hopes, for the peace of mind of those concerned, that this book was kept under lock and key—for in its pages no holds were barred and the well-known "graciousness" of the Governor was laid aside; the irritability of the moment was given free play and, consequently, many of the judgments recorded proved later to have been hasty and unjust.

In the case of Samuel Black, the explorer of the Finlay River, the dice were loaded against him before ever the Governor took up his pen. Not for nothing did Black receive, some time in 1821 from his old associates and partners of the North West Company, a ring on which was engraved: "To the most worthy of the worthy Northwesters." By his mere presence at Chipewyan in the early months of 1821 Black had kept Simpson, the newcomer to the fur country, perpetually on the *qui vive*, waiting for the attack that never came. Simpson's men would have been aware of this and he himself would always remember, and hold against Black in the years to come, the alarms and perplexities of that first winter at Fort Wedderburn. And so it is with this in mind that we find Simpson writing in his Character Book of 1832 regarding Black:

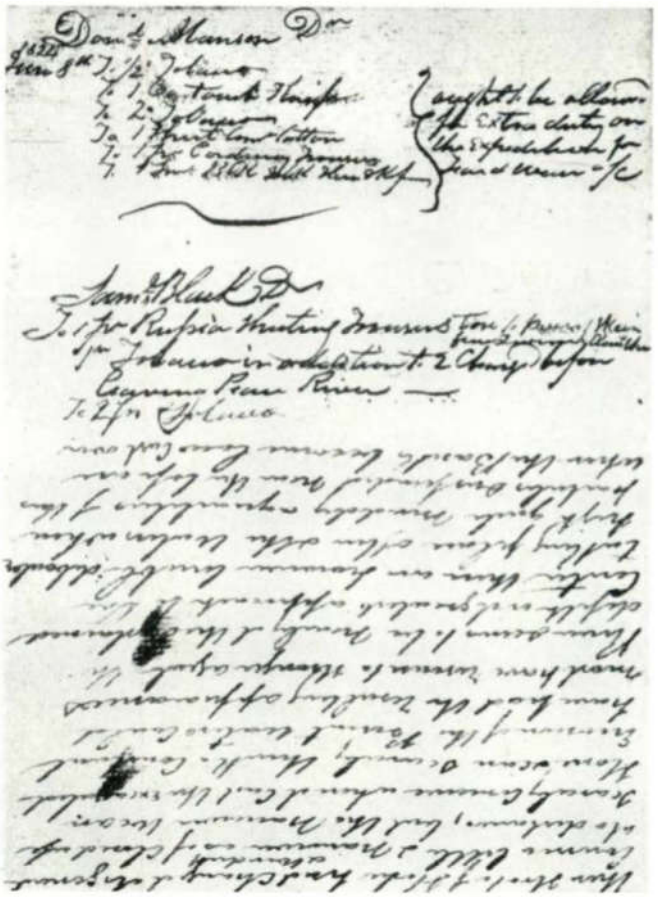
> No. 11. About 52 years of Age. The strangest Man I ever knew. So wary & suspicious that it is scarcely possible to get a direct answer from him on any point, and when he does speak or write on any subject so prolix that it is quite fatiging to attempt following him. A perfectly honest man and his generosity might be considered indicative of a warmth of heart if he was not known to be a cold blooded fellow who could be guilty of any cruelty and would be a perfect Tyrant if he had power. Can never forget what he may consider a slight or insult, and fancies that every man has a design upon him. Very cool, resolute to desperation, and equal to the cutting of a throat with perfect deliberation; yet his word when he can be brought to the point may be depended on. A Don quixote in appearance ghastly, raw boned and lanthorn jawed, yet strong vigorous and active. Has not the talent of conciliating Indians by whom he is disliked, but who are ever in dread of him, and well they may be so, as he is ever on his guard against them and so suspicious that offensive and defensive preparation seem to be the study of his Life having Dirks knives & loaded Pistols concealed about his person and in all directions about his Establishment even under his Table cloth at Meals and in his Bed. He would be admirably adapted for the Service of the North West coast where the Natives are so treacherous were it not that he cannot agree with his colleagues which renders it necessary to give him a distinct charge. I should be sorry to see a man of such character at our Council board. Tolerably well Educated and most patient and labourous in whatever he sets about, but so tedious that it is impossible to get through business with him.

The very fact that Simpson, who had met and known so many men and so many queer characters, describes Black as "The strangest Man I ever knew" is in itself a sort of left-handed compliment: it indicates a certain strength of character—or, if not that, then at least a union of opposites in one complex human being that merits examination. Black's character shows in his writings; and anyone living with him, on and off for four years or so, as I did while working on his Journal, gradually builds for himself a picture of the man—tall, big-boned and angular; deep-voiced and slow speaking. To this figure certain mental characteristics attach themselves, one by one: they emerge from the pages of the Journal and they appear between the close lines of minute handwriting in the field notebooks, written in pencil, or in ink that has faded a little, or sometimes in ink that is still as black as it was in 1824 and 1825—notes that were made on the spot, in rain or shine and often *en Canoe*. And now and then a glimpse comes to us through the eyes of one who knew him—Simpson, it may be, or McLoughlin; Black's friend, John Stuart, or his victim, Peter Fidler. And his fellow North Wester and life-long friend, Peter Skene Ogden. . . .

The first thing that emerges from Simpson's Character Book estimate of Black is his tediousness and prolixity. I have wondered whether, in the meetings of these two men after 1821, this was not a form of self-defence on Black's part—a barrier which he erected against a man whom he cannot have liked and who was personally responsible for the temporary exclusion of himself, Ogden, and Cuthbert Grant from the fur trade at the union of the two Companies.

Father Morice, the priest-historian-geographer, must have had access to some of Black's private correspondence. From it he draws the conclusion that Black "must have been a good-natured man who saw life through rose-colored glasses and had not a little sense of the ludicrous. . . ." Amongst other evidence of this Father Morice cites a letter of Black's to Chief Trader Alexander Fisher. Fisher was in charge of Alexandria and so, in the latter part of his time there, had the misfortune to be sandwiched in between Black and Ogden, next-door neighbour of each and, as the crow flies, 150 miles from either. He was not a likable character: Cuthbert Cumming wrote of him from

Mr. Patterson wrote the introduction to the new volume of the Hudson's Bay Record Society (Page 30).



A page from Black's rawhide-covered notebook of 1824, bearing his signature, and showing goods charged to his assistant, Donald Manson, and himself. Diary entries, evidently for Sept. 23, are written on the other half of the page. B.C. Archives

Chats, ". . . he is a man by no means scruplous in what he says & cares not by what means he obtains the end—it is natural to suppose that a man of his vindictive disposition will blacken the character of every man in this District. . . ."

The sort of man, in short, who would automatically arouse the very worst in forthright, outspoken men like Black and Ogden—and Father Morice quotes at length from a letter of Black's which he regards as a satire on Fisher's "well-known foibles." The letter is dated Oct. 29th, 1832, and starts with some details as to the supply of salmon. Then:

Lolo [B.'s interpreter] tells me of the many tricks wherewith you deceive the Indians, such as making holy water in wash handbasins, dressing up your cook to make him hold it, walking about the house with a whitewash brush in your hand with many mumblings and magical words, sprinkling the natives in said holy water, telling them that if they do not come to your place to dance and bring their furs with them this fall, they will be swallowed up like another Sodom into a fiery furnace or boiling cauldron . . . thereby frightening the Indians from walking on God's earth & going about their usual occupations. However, as some of these poor devils may have resisted such an imposition on their understanding which you practise in order to get their furs, Lolo makes his usual tour among the natives belonging to this district, being instructed by no means or pretence whatever to interfere in any way or trade a single skin from any Indian that has been accustomed to frequent your post. At the same time he is to get information as to the truth of the reports concerning your proceedings, and when he returns and gives me the necessary proofs of so infamous tricks then I will act accordingly for the general interest of the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company, not to get the Indian's furs for one year, but always . . . and make truth triumph against jugglery, tricks and profanations of God's holy rites and sacraments. . . .

A fragment only of Fisher's indignant reply was seen by Father Morice, ending with the words "I regret to find myself situated as I am (your neighbor); for it is evident you wish to get me or yourself into trouble. I have with great caution avoided you. . . ." The Father, who was evidently thoroughly enjoying this correspondence, regrets the disappearance of the rest of it. He felt that he was losing something, "were it only the occasion of a good smile at the expense of the poor, rapacious trader, who was in dead earnest, whatever may have been Black's real intentions or meaning."

A thought occurred to me recently—to go again to Black's field notebooks in the British Columbia Archives and to compare what he had written there with the final, official version of his Journal—to see, that is, whether he had "written up" the Journal, adding embellishments from memory, or whether what he had written for his own eyes alone might not be even more detailed.

As I peered at that small writing, with patience and a magnifying glass, one definite fact emerged: it was the *Journal* that had been cut down, incredible as that may seem to those who have studied it. Let me give one or two examples:

Journal. May 22, 1824. ". . . made a Portage at a Rapid. . . ."

Notebook. Same date. ". . . arrived at a Rapid made a Portage of 500 Paces over a low flat point of mica & vains of white clear stone (Quartz) the River runs over a bed of this mica like substance the strata is in scales [word illegible] in leaves or scales small bits like Talk & a few little square bits of yellow harder substance."

This was at the Finlay Rapids at the head of the Peace. The yellow substance in the schist was iron pyrites.

Notebook. May 27. "The Old Slave and I having debarkd below the Rapid went to the end I think the Canoe can go up wt some pieces in it untill the last Cape when a Short Portage can be made tho [word illegible] stiff & perpendicular to get up the Cape tho intended by nature for a Portage but the most of the Load must be carried across in which there is some stiff hills & a [inky thumb mark here] set the men (who arrived about 1½ or 2 hours before sunset at the little ense*) about putting their axes in order to cut a Road for no one has ever passed there for I suppose the Iroquois have gone up without making a Portage perhaps at low water. The Men had a hard pull along the Caps to get to this place they crossd twice before they got here this place is a surprise to us all as we only heard of its being a Rapid & if the Portage they speak of far from this is as bad in proportion we shall have bad work to get on we are not yet near the place [word illegible] the Portages we will take 5 days more to go but its the Current for we do not now make far in a day sent my Bouts [Bowsman and Sternsman] to examine this place.

[Later, and after trimming his pen] La Guard & Perreault came back from examining the Rapid & say tho they might go up in the Canoe they think it a risque & want to make the Portage."

This was at Deserters' Canyon, and here the notebook account is *more than twice as long* as the corresponding passage in the Journal, which does not contain the interesting references to the Iroquois, Black's predecessors up the Finlay.

*Anse i.e. little bay.

Fort Nez Perces (Walla Walla) where Black was in charge from 1825 to 1830.
From Isaac Stevens' "Pacific Railroad Survey" of 1855.

On the following day Black found that Bouché and Ossin had deserted him in the night. Of these men the Journal says, under May 28: ". . . the former an Old offender and the latter a simpleton & debau[c]hed by the other Scamp Bouche." It is the notebook, however, that adds the human touch: "J. M. Bouche is the Rascal & debauched the other who is also a worthless scamp but a simple devil & thinks to get to his wife at Fort Chipewean." Here also Black records that, in addition to the Company property which Bouché and Ossin stole, they had the effrontery to go off with "Mr. Manson's Pot Crook."

The field notebooks contain accounts of various journeys and end with Black's notes, made for his personal use and with no official report in view, on his trip down the Columbia River in Oct.-Nov. 1825. His terrier-like interest in all visible things is very noticeable here: Indian encampments, geological structures, and the gradual appearance of the western larch—all are recorded. South of McGillivray's River, which is now the Kootenay, the party travelled "smelling Fish and Eagles all day." One would not smell them now: Grand Coulée Dam in the State of Washington has effectively destroyed the salmon run on the long Canadian section of the Columbia River.

Black was at the Kettle Falls portage on Oct. 28-29, and devotes three pages to that place, describing the trees, rocks and grassy hills, all of which "appearing in the sweep of View gives Romantic variety to the scene." He is particularly attentive to an old Indian burial ground on a point by the portage:

> . . . at this burial Place or sacrifice Place we find a cluster Head Tombstones set up right wt small stones keeping them up about these Tombs is painted boards 4 or more feet high red & one white stripe the Tool of the Boards tied in an old mat of rushes and kept up in the Boards by 2 sticks one over each side tied at the ends round these Tombstones & on Poles & Trees near them are hung wt sacrifices their furniture utensils & Bags also a nearly new 2½ pt. Blanket a good open Kettle the Pole large driven through its bottom also an Old Callico shirt numbers of small Kettles & an excellent mat made of Goats Wool white wt Cold bass.

It must have been from this collection of kettles dangling like some strange fruit from poles and trees that these falls and the nearby Kettle River got their names.

The next stop was at the Spokane River Forks and here the party got the news that Dr. McLoughlin might be found at "Spokan House." Several of Black's travelling companions promptly took to horse, and Black's diary leaves geology and botany to remark: "Mr. McL[eod] goes himself to meet the Doctor to Intrigue or Jockey me out of my appointment. The Ermatinger Lads have no Pscruples & will fall in wt his views in rising & propagating something to work on the Doctor but they will fail as the Doctor is too Old a Cock to be taken wt Chaff. . . ."

This must be an illustration of Simpson's remark in the Character Book: ". . . fancies that every man has a design upon him." If so, then Black did not take these fancied intrigues very seriously; he evidently had full confidence in the Doctor for he remained with the boats and notes in his diary the return of his companions with their horses all sweated up from a very fast seventy-mile ride.

How much Black has to tell us! And, with a little better education, how much more clearly he could have set it down! He was probably a moody man—soured, too, at least for a time, by the fact that he had wasted five of his remaining active years at Nez Percés when he longed, above all things, to be sent on active service "to discover new lands." He may have been all things to all men—a friend of the gay Ogden, a tedious windbag to the Governor, a furious duellist to the naturalist, David Douglas, whom he challenged for the honour of the Company. He may have been disliked by the Nez Percés against whom he had to be on his guard; but it was at McLoughlin's orders that he had maintained, and refused to lower, his prices at Fort Nez Percés. Certainly elsewhere and in his writings he shows a strong sympathy for the Indians who, he says, are like children "siting in darkness seeking for light." And it is not a harsh man who would record, on July 14, 1824, that his Sikanni carriers "made away with all our dried Deers Meat & cast a wistful eye on the Pemican & requires some resolution to resist so many pleased faces. . . ."

The end came on Feb. 8th, 1841, at Thompson's River—and on that day this enigmatic man, so wary and suspicious

according to Simpson, and so busy with precautions against attack, appears to have taken no notice at all of the Indian who was sitting by the fire in his hall, waiting to kill him. Others were suspicious but not Black, who merely extended to the Indian a little more than the customary hospitality and then went ahead with his own affairs.

This Indian was a nephew of Chief Tranquille who had died shortly before. Tranquille's widow had persuaded the young man that Black's "medicine" had been the cause of her husband's death, and now he was at Thompson's River on a mission of vengeance. Towards evening the Indian was left alone in the hall, when Black passed through on his way to his quarters. The Indian took his gun from its place of concealment in some dark corner and, as Black stooped to pass through a low doorway, he fired and the old fur-trader pitched forward, dead. In the confusion that followed the Indian escaped from the fort.

Nothing seems to fit in these estimates of Black. They vary too much and often contradict each other. It seems that you either liked the man or disliked him intensely. He aroused no negative feelings.

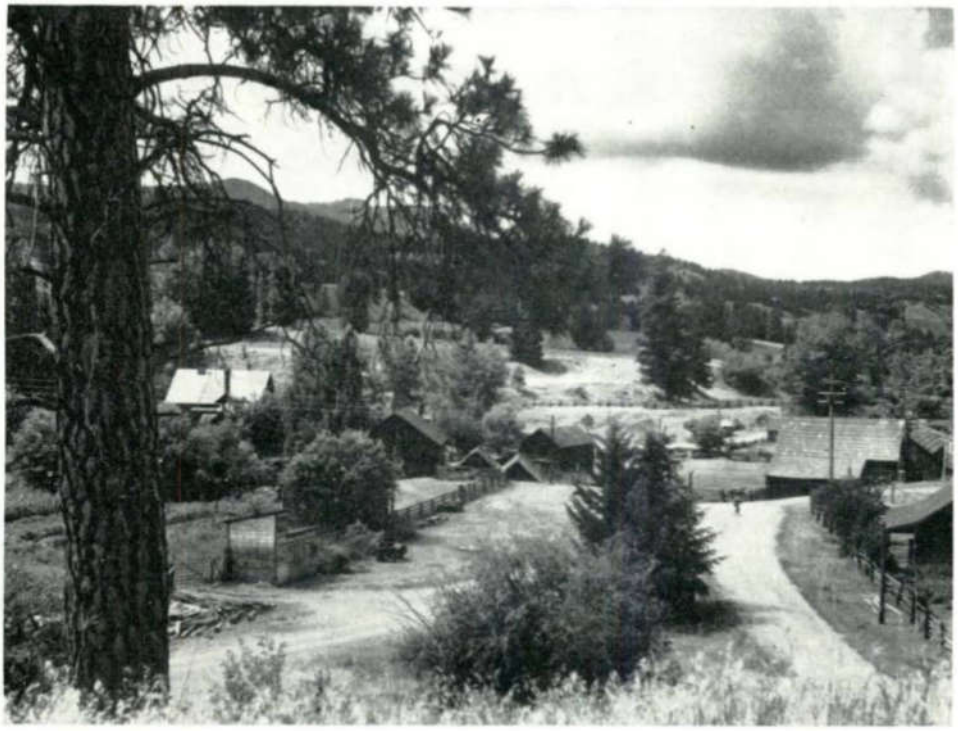
A sale was held, at Jasper's House in the spring of 1842, of the contents of a trunk of Black's that had got marooned there. Little unfortunately, is to be learned from the various items. There were shaving implements, a towel, two brushes, soap, two pairs of silk hose (worn), and a braided surtout. A clay pipe and a German pipe proclaimed him a smoker, and a "Liquor case, partly furnished" reminds us that he was not a teetotaller. There were odds and ends of clothing, and bits of weapons that may have seen service at Ile-à-la-Crosse—a sword belt, gun implements, one broken double barrel pistol, a "Garnished Shot pouch," and "1 damd. case Matl. Instruments & pistol flask." There were some geological specimens and—of most interest to us today—"4 vols. pocket Cyclopaedia, 1 dictionary, 1 plated pencil case and 1 portfolio (old)"—the tools of the writer.

There still remains one last question mark—one more facet to this curious character. This villain, this outlaw and felon—I am quoting George Simpson—took good care of his mother in Scotland. In 1813 and 1814, when he was earning £90 per annum sterling, he sent home to her over £50. Then comes a blank in the records—and then, from 1829-39 inclusive, Black sent his mother various sums, amounting in all to £630. A further order for £100 arrived too late to be paid for Mrs. Black had died almost a year previously. And £730 of the year 1840, translated into the values of our time, represents a goodly sum.

Nicola, chief of the Okanagans, pronounced Black's funeral oration: ". . . he was kind, just and generous to us," the Indian said, "and I know he loved us."

What exactly did Nicola intend by that? Did he really mean it? or was it because the ammunition issue had been suspended after Black's murder and it was vital to the Indians that it should be restored?

It is unlikely that we shall ever know. •



The Ponderosa pine under which Black was buried at Monte Creek, some 15 miles east of Kamloops.
R. M. Patterson.

SAMUEL BLACK ON THE FINLAY

A review of the 18th volume
of the Hudson's Bay Record Society

by Guy Blanchet

THE publication of Samuel Black's Journal of his Rocky Mountain Expedition of 1824 makes available another interesting exploration of a trader-explorer. The original signed copy had been buried in the Hudson's Bay Company archives but unsigned copies had appeared in strange places in fragmentary form. These had led to the assumption that John Finlay had charge of the expedition until an entry in the Chipewyan day book noted that "Bouché and Ossin, deserters from Black's Rocky Mountain expedition had arrived. . . ."

Peace River cuts through the Rockies and to the west it forks, the Parsnip draining from the south and the Finlay from the north through an unknown wilderness. Alexander Mackenzie had explored the Parsnip and a new field for the fur trade was discovered. Governor Simpson had hopes of a similar development to the north with the Finlay providing access. He with the agreement of the Council at York Factory decided to make the exploration and Samuel Black was placed in charge.

The excellent introduction by R. M. Patterson based on a careful study of original documents sketches Black's life from his birth in Scotland to his murder near Kamloops, and the footnotes clear many obscure passages in the journal. Black appears as a powerful man physically and one of the outstanding Northwesters in fighting all "intruders" seeking fur in what he considered their country. In doing so he used fair means and foul and was described by Simpson as a scoundrel. However, after the union in 1821, he retained Black, recognizing his qualities of a man of action and determination and appointed him as second choice to take charge of the expedition, the first being Peter Warren Dease.

Black justified his appointment in carrying through a difficult task and in keeping a record of the river and the country through which it flows, of the possibilities of trade in furs and of the natives. In spite of the difficulties he encountered, he did not turn back until he felt that nothing could be gained by further advance.

He interpreted his task as an exploration and stressed this point with the natives he met: "I did not come as a trader but to see the lands." In his journal beaver are mentioned incidentally and so seldom as to offer little for the fur trade. On the other hand, he was a careful observer and a faithful recorder. It is almost incredible to picture Black, a man of action and a hard, determined leader, each day recording what he saw, where he went, what he said and what he heard. It is not a log of travel, nor a narrative of his journey but such a jumble of facts, observations and minor incidents that it is difficult to follow any thread of interest. A day's record might run to three printed pages; only once was it reduced to three lines.

In describing scenery, Black shows a sensitiveness and imagination that one would not expect. He attempts to describe rocks in simple language but without any technical knowledge. He notes, "We may have been passing interesting objects to a Scientific Gentleman without knowing them." At the same time, Scientific Gentlemen may find in Black's "bablings" a fair idea of the rock formations which he attempted to describe.

A journal of an explorer often reveals the man as much as his travels. There are many passages in Black's journal that are strangely at variance with the picture of an aggressive fur trader and the determined leader of a difficult expedition. One that stands out is a morning entry between two days of hard travel. This might be a thought in a man's mind, but he would seldom record it in an official document. It runs, "Indulged an hour longer in Morpheus' chains waking out of which the white resplendent orb of day was illuminating the blue azure sky and varigated mountains reflecting his dancing beams in the silvery mirror of the lake."

In the profuseness of his daily records, his companions seldom emerge as individuals and with few exceptions, the Indians whom he met and who assisted him, are credited with few virtues. The Sekanis of the Fishing Lakes he describes as being "like Imps staring through human materials." They were poor providers, living on the verge of starvation, depending on the small life of the country and competing with the bears in digging for roots. They were hunters, not trappers, and Black's expedition could only be an episode in their struggle for existence in a country that had little to offer and where starvation followed close on the heels of the feasts. Their idea of trade was a most primitive one of barter with adjoining tribes.

Black complains of his lack of a competent interpreter "who could cross examine the natives for they are all liars." It is true that La Prise, his interpreter, had difficulty in talk with the natives. Their languages, essentially the same, had local dialects. It is probable that misinformation was often due to misunderstanding. Then too, the Indian will often say what he thinks will please his questioner, or, on the other hand, exaggerate difficulties of a journey he does not wish to make. In other words, he is a politician rather than a liar!

Of Black's companions, Donald Manson, his clerk, is seldom mentioned favourably. La Guarde, his foreman, proved to be capable and loyal and he is referred to in a number of passages, as in one entry when La Guarde

(Continued on page 31)

THE GRAND SEIGNEUR

On January the third it was announced that Sir Winston Churchill had accepted the honorary appointment of Grand Seigneur of the Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay. This title was especially created by the Hudson's Bay Company "in order to do honour to the greatest living statesman, and to renew the Company's link with the illustrious name of Churchill." For Sir Winston's ancestor, the great Marlborough, son of a former Sir Winston Churchill, was Governor of the Company for seven years.

I am with all
your Royalle highnes
obedient servant
Churchill

Sir Wins
in t
the Lord

From th
Bernard Fi
Maison

of the

John Churc
Duke of M
Governor o
Hudson's B
1685-1692.
From the p
by Sir God
in Beaver I
London.

ton Churchill
e uniform of
Warden of the
Cinque Ports.
painting by
ilstone in the
Dieu, Dover.
by courtesy of
the Registrar
Cinque Ports.

ill, first
rlborough,
the
ry Company,

inting
rey Kneller
ouse,

"the illustrious name of Churchill..."

Yours sincerely,

Winston S. Churchill

As John, Lord Churchill, he succeeded the Duke of York in that office when in 1685 the latter became King James II. On the whole, the period of his governorship was marked by prosperity, and in 1690 the Committee presented him with a gold plate "for his great care and troubles in their concernes." But battles with the French on Hudson Bay made serious inroads on the fur trade during the last years of his regime.

It was largely due to his resounding victories over the French on the continent that Britain was enabled to regain control of the Bay in 1714. Three years later Fort Churchill, named after the Duke, was built on its shores at the mouth of the Churchill River.

Sir Winston referred to his family connection with the Company, when just before VE Day, he congratulated it on the attainment of its 275th anniversary. "Its life," he wrote to the governor, "has been filled with achievements of which you may be justly proud. Yours is a fine record of enterprise in opening the vast territories of North America and in serving their peoples."

Now he has done honour to this 286-year-old Company by becoming its first Grand Seigneur.

To all to whom these Presents shall come The Governor Deputy Governor and Committee of the COMPANY OF ADVENTURERS OF ENGLAND TRADING INTO HUDSON'S BAY Send Greeting! Know ye that We by virtue of the Power and Authority to us given by The Most High and Mighty Prince CHARLES II by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith &c by His Letters Patent bearing date the Second day of May in the Twenty-second year of His Reign do hereby constitute and appoint

SIR WINSTON LEONARD SPENCER CHURCHILL

Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Member of the Order of Merit, Member of the Order of the Companions of Honour, a Member of Parliament and One of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, to be

THE GRAND SEIGNEUR

of the said COMPANY OF ADVENTURERS OF ENGLAND TRADING INTO HUDSON'S BAY.

GIVEN under our Common Seal at our house in London this Thirteenth day of December in the Fourth year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lady ELIZABETH II by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith and in the year of Our Lord One thousand nine hundred and fifty-five

Governor

Deputy Governor

The deed appointing Sir Winston Churchill as Grand Seigneur of the Hudson's Bay Company. The lion rampant and the fleur-de-lys are taken from the Spencer-Churchill coat-of-arms.

returned from investigating a dangerous canyon in tears saying that it was impossible. Black comments, "I know him for a good man and willing to do his best and an excellent foreman but of a mulish cast . . . I let him have his way." La Guarde contributed largely to the success of the expedition by his skill as a boatman and his willingness to do his part in whatever had to be done.

La Prise, the interpreter, also stands out as an important member of the expedition. He and his wife "the Rib" travelled in a small canoe. He was loyal and willing to do his part as interpreter and hunter but was not very good at either. In the end, on July 25, he announced "that if I did not give him liberty to remain behind, he would desert." It is probable that the Rib forced him to this decision but his departure left Black without an interpreter.

It may have been lack of companionship that led Black to resort to his journal which must have occupied many long hours, in the canoe recording the passing scene, and in his bivouac. Such a journal would almost of necessity be a confusion of many different observations that appeared to him as important, interesting or curious. There is a saying in the North that when following a moose one should not run off on rabbit trails. Black in his journal confuses the moose trail, his exploration, with many rabbit trails of minor interest.

From his daily records a comparatively short, clear report could have been made, on the river as an access to the northern interior, of the limitations of the rugged mountainous country as a source of fur, and of the natives. This was the information desired by the committee and though they would have to write off the expedition as a loss they would have had confidence in Black's judgment.

From another angle, an interesting narrative could be written, based on his journal of the penetration of an unknown rugged wilderness, adventures of his river travel and overland and of the most primitive natives he encountered, their customs, dress and appearance. An exploration into unknown country can only be made once and a record of it assists later travellers who may note the changes in the country, the people and the wild life.

Black's Journal contains much that should interest Scientific Gentlemen but as a report to the Committee, one can appreciate Simpson's comment: "When he does speak or write on any subject he is so prolix that it is quite fatiging to attempt following him." The present writer after making many notes from reading the journal found that these notes were too prolix even for a review and would recommend a study of the journal itself to anyone interested in a particular aspect of it.

When Black reached the head of Finlay River, he might have considered his mission accomplished but he was still determined to search for new lands. He had hoped that by an overland journey to the northwest, he might find better country for fur. Unfortunately, this still led through rugged mountains into an unprofitable wilderness. He crossed the Arctic-Pacific divide and reached headwater streams of the Stikine, draining to the Pacific, and again he crossed this divide to waters draining east. He assumed that this river was one of the headwaters of the Liard. After following this river for two days where it tumbled through the mountains, he wisely decided that it was useless to proceed farther north and that an attempt to descend with his limited supplies and no canoe by this unknown stream, to equally unknown waters of the Liard, would be not only unprofitable but hazardous.

In a very long and involved entry of August 17 he notes: "our principle motive is to discover Beaver & I have keept between the River Liard & Simpsons or Babine River Territories in quest of a level country, but have not found it, or any thing of a fine Beaver Country & what there is may be inaccessible, even amongst these horrid Rocks a few Beaver can be picked up. . . . The mountains confining this Valley are here on both sides lofty, spacious & majestic." There follows a rambling description of the country and vegetation and finally:

Thus situated without a good Hunter or prospects of subsisting & a good Months Voyage by Land & by water to Peace River & being unavoidably at the mercy of the Natives & casualties destroying our Caches in part securing our retreat & the low state of our Provender, also the uncertainty of the course this River takes or where it runs to, the impediments it offers by Land & Water, consequently slow progress to be expected; the advanced state of the season & without craft or the materials to make it. . . . Thus after mature consideration & deliberation; our Councilling has ended in a Resolve to return the best way we can to Lake Thutade . . . moreover although this River may be one of the Branches of Liard River . . . the discoveries already made from Liard River establishment is not very great. . . ."

and on and on to:

"I therefore hope for the indulgence of the Gentlemen of the concern for not following that part of the resolve of making our exit in Mackenzies River particularly when real service is improbable. . . ."

He rambles on but essentially he notes his decision that there was no purpose continuing north, that an attempt to descend by the Liard was unwise and unprofitable and that he had made the difficult decision to abandon further exploration and to return by the way he had come. In this decision, he was wise as we can picture his situation in view of what we know today.

The return journey reveals little new knowledge of the country. They reached his cache at the Fishing Lakes and with delight threw off their packs and embarked in their canoe and made their way down the turbulent Finlay.

Black ends his journal with an apology: "I am aware that the prolixity & profuseness of this Journal will creat unfavorable impressions on the minds of Gentlemen of Business connected with the Concern & have again to apologize for meddling with Subjects I am so little acquainted with but hope for their indulgence, wishing in the best manner possible in my own way to convey all the information in my power of the Country the expedition passed through. The writer is more at a loss to offer an apology for the errors in Orthography &c, and the hurried style of the performance."

Black's expedition accomplished what he set out to do. His journal is a faithful record and a valuable one. More than a century has passed but Black's shrewd observations still form the basis of knowledge of the country he explored and yet his journal is much as Simpson described: ". . . So prolix that it is quite fatiging to attempt following him."◆

NINETY YEARS LATER

by F. C. Swannell

Photos from Swannell Colln., B.C. Archives

A tale of hard northern travel in the old style, exploring the wild Upper Finlay, 90 years after Samuel Black.

IN the season of 1914 I was commissioned to explore and map the Finlay from Fort Grahame to its headwaters. No definite information existed except that obtained by R. G. McConnell of the Geological Survey (*Beaver*, Dec. 1948) in 1893. He got as far by canoe as the foot of the Long Canyon and across country on foot to the legendary Fishing Lakes. No other organized expedition had been up the river except that of Samuel Black in 1824. Part of Black's journal had been examined by J. B. Tyrrell at Cumberland House in 1894. It was unsigned and ascribed to John Finlay. However in 1914 I had never heard of this.

This is the story, in part, of my 1914 survey, being the recollections of myself and of my assistant, George V. Copley, and extracts from my field diary of forty years ago. George Copley, born in the backwoods of Vancouver Island in 1880, was an excellent woodsman, my oldest friend, and my field assistant for five previous seasons. He was a keen botanist and was specially qualified to report on the flora of the Finlay Basin. We are the only two of the four-man party still living.

James Alexander, another of our party, was a strongly framed six-foot Scotch half-breed. He was born at Fort St. James in 1868, son of the factor of the Hudson's Bay Company there, and educated at the Catholic Indian School at Williams Lake. The Rev. A. G. Morice, the great linguist, and author of the authoritative *History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia*, himself told me it was mainly from Jimmy that he acquired his profound knowledge of the Carrier language. Jimmy had spent his whole life trapping, hunting, and working for the Hudson's Bay Company. He was a wonderful canoeman and "read" water intuitively. He died at Fort St. James in 1952.

Then there was our cook, Nep Ah Yuen, alias Jim Young, and referred to in my diary as Jim. Cantonese by birth, he had been employed on C.P.R. construction as a youth, and subsequently as a tailor in Victoria, logging-camp cook, trapper and placer-miner. An excellent cook and general all-round survey hand and horse-packer, he had worked for me for five seasons. The last time I saw Jim was thirty years ago when he was returning to China. There was a revolution on and Jim proposed to make a fortune peddling arms to *both* sides! How he fared I do not know.

Fort St. James was our point of organization. From there to Fort McLeod we went by pack-train, most of our supplies having been sent there by dog-train over the snows the previous winter. From McLeod's Lake the trail of the northern rivers commenced.

In 1913 we had built a large dug-out canoe, by a method as primitive as that of Robinson Crusoe. Having no adze we made one by heating a Hudson's Bay axe red hot, turning the blade at right angles to the handle and re-tempering. A large cottonwood tree was felled and the butt-log was shaped into a canoe by chipping and charring. We filled the hull half-full of water into which we threw red hot stones until the water boiled. The softened gunwales could then be forced apart and thwarts inserted. This was the canoe we used for the journey up the Finlay.

The trip down the Pack and Parsnip Rivers and up to Fort Grahame on the Finlay—157 miles in all—was uneventful. Our canoe was so heavily loaded we had only three inches of gunwale and as the Finlay was in flood, overflowing into the banks, progress was painfully slow, sometimes only eight miles in a long, hard day. There was no "poling-bottom" and the current at bends ran like a mill-race. The 16-foot poles gave no purchase, with only two or three feet above water slatting against the gunwale. Lining was impossible. We dragged ourselves upstream by the over-

F. C. Swannell, D.L.S., is a retired B.C. government surveyor. A few years ago he went to England in a windjammer around the Horn.

hanging willows; maybe the bowman could drive the spike of his pole into a jutting log and pull the canoe up inch by inch or the sternsman could in turn shove against the log. Some of the channels through log jams were so swift that, as Jimmy phrased it, it was "jes lak going upstairs."

We were eight days reaching Fort Grahame, arriving there June 2nd, 1914. We surveyed up to the mouth of the Ingenika River which we ascended for 78 miles—the extreme limit of canoe navigation—and got back to Ingenika mouth on July 16. Copley and I then went by trail to Fort Grahame. I now quote the diary verbatim:

"July 21st. 5 am; temp. 49°: noon; 85°. Arrive at Fort Grahame 10 am. Ross, the factor, is down river and many Sikannis are camped here. Seven are sick, five already dead. Disease unknown, probably largely starvation. Although they can see food on the shelves they are too honest to break in, and are amazed that I dare break the flimsy lock and serve them out supplies. It reminds me of Butler in *The Wild North Land* and the Indian "Moose That Walks"[who would not break into the H.B. store at Hudson's Hope to get food] . . . Four prospectors and old Ward arrive. Copley collected wild strawberry leaves, boiled them and added maple syrup to the infusion. This cured the Indians of dysentery caused by starvation and the boiled flour gruel they had been living on.

"Sat. 25. [at Deserters' Canyon]. Rain most of the morning and evening. Portage our very heavy canoe, using a Spanish windlass up the first steep grade. The Klondikers of '98 had laid skids across the portage, but these and their windlass were rotten and we had to renew them. The river at the foot of the canyon had risen three feet overnight and there is fresh snow on the mountains. . . . There is a bad cascade and whirlpool at the foot and no beach whatever up the canyon. It would be impossible to line up even large bateaux. Large spruce, uprooted above, floating down are sucked under at the head of the canyon and never reappear for several hundred yards."

(Note: May 28, 1824, Samuel Black writes in his journal: "This morning I had the mortification to find that in the course of last night Two of the Crew had deserted Viz Jean Marie Bouche and Louis Ossin. . . . These Vagabonds have stolen a good dale of the Companies property." From this incident the Canyon got its name.)

From Deserters' Canyon to the foot of Long Canyon 170 miles up the Finlay there are no rapids but the current is uniformly swift, the river some 250 yards wide. Above the confluence of the Kwatacha (or Whitewater) the water is crystal clear. The pack-trail of the Klondikers of '98 runs up the east bank; we found several cabins in which they had wintered. Pathetic records of their hardships were the skeletons of their pack-horses, rigging and cross-tree pack-saddles still in place as they died of exhaustion or were shot. The word "Sousie" was branded into one saddle.

Members of the party and others at Fort Grahame on the Finlay, after their hazardous expedition. L. to R., standing: Flameau (H B C), Swannell, Ross, Post manager; Rossette, Copley, Alexander. Sitting: Nep Yuen, Dick, Kastberg.

In the diary are frequent references to the game with which we eked out our dwindling supplies. Jimmy was our Nimrod. Up to August 31 he had bagged 1 moose, 4 beaver, 29 rabbits, 41 grouse, a porcupine, 6 geese, and a coyote (reserved for dog feed). Copley was our rabbit expert, 100 to his credit besides 25 willow grouse, 52 fool-hens (spruce partridge); all got with a .22 calibre rifle. I brought in 35 grouse, 2 goats, and a muskrat for the mulligan. We all fished, but Jim Yuen was our Izaak Walton, 60 large trout and 32 grayling. In addition he provided 24 grouse and picked 13 quarts of cranberries and black currants. On August 15 it is solemnly noted: "The cook loses a 24 in. 'sapi' trout which carries away hook and gut cast. Two miles further up on the opposite shore and over an hour later he catches the identical fish, a 5 pounder."

Now to resume the diary entries:

"Sept 3rd. Long Canyon has one very bad chute below 'Split Rock' [Black's 'Old Man']. At Split Rock the water banks up at high water 30 feet. The main channel is 50 feet wide, a bad drop and broken water surging against the rock. We had to bivouac half way up the canyon, each of us curled round and anchored by a tree, there being no level spot large enough to pitch a tent on.

"Sept. 5th to 8th. Getting up Cascade Canyon. The worst place being where four channels cut through hard rock, the cascades dropping 25 feet sheer. We laid skids here, dragging the canoe up and hauled it up 200 yards of very bad water, waist deep at times. The canyon walls were sheer, making it impossible to portage. Our camps were mere bivouacs.

"Sept. 8th. Got the canoe at last through the canyon. The head of the canyon, a channel 100 feet wide between 100 foot cliffs, is very deep but with a strong draw.

"Break a beaver dam and get one beaver. Great excitement as dog Dick chases a moose into the river and dashes in after it. We are afraid to shoot for fear of hitting Dick.

"Sept. 11th. We tackled the Big Bend of the Finlay; it taking us until the 17th to reach the first cataract. The river for ten miles was swift and shallow with numerous islands and high water channels, the latter often blocked at the top with driftwood. The riffles were so shallow that the pole could not be used and resort was made to 'frogging', i.e. all hands jumped overboard and dragged the canoe up by main force. Above Porcupine Creek the stream became a succession of boulder-strewn rapids."

The valley bottom was worthless and stony, denuded of soil by the fierce forest fires which had swept over it—a legacy from the Klondikers. Game was almost non-existent, a serious matter with food running low. Jim could no longer cheer us with our one luxury, a delectable mixture of bacon-fat and molasses called "Hudson's Bay honey"—no molasses, no bacon left. Jimmy got one caribou and, under dramatic circumstances, a large moose:

"Sept. 14th. Day 139: Camp 75: 5 am; 39°: noon 52°: 5 pm 49°. Dick runs after a moose and Jimmy shoots at it and wounds it from across the river. It takes to the water and Jimmy drops his rifle, grabs a pole and plunges in followed by our smaller dog. He wades and swims out, climbs on top of the moose and cuts its throat mid-stream, the little dog yipping frantically and snapping at the moose. Jimmy, although he endeavoured to guide his novel craft shoreward with his long stick, was carried downstream a quarter of a mile and stranded on a bar at the head of an island."

It was after dark when Jimmy reached camp triumphantly, dripping wet. Next day the cook cut the moosemeat into long strips and smoked it over a fire of alder and willow. Next year I took a sample to France; compared with it, German war bread was a succulent luxury!

"Friday 18th: 5 am 31°; heavy frost; noon; 51° 5 pm; 50°. Fall has set in with a vengeance! Move half mile to foot of [Reef] Canyon. One bad cataract and two rapids. River looks so bad that Copley and I scramble several miles upstream through incredibly rough country, all rocks, windfall and underbrush. The Canyons appear all but impossible and we nearly decide to abandon the water route. However, since a boy, Jimmy had heard of the mysterious Fishing Lakes and we easily persuade him to tackle the canyons."

After forty years I well remember the little quiet cove and sandy beach between two jutting rock points where we camped. It is undoubtedly Black's "L'Ence [Anse] du Sables" of 90 years before. He writes: "June 9th [1824] L'Ence du Sables at the foot of a kind of Cascade . . . & a bad Rapid above it . . . a noble precipice on the left . . . & the River as white as snow as far as We can see." As Copley and I did, so, strangely enough, did he, and for the same reason. He camped and sent a man ahead. I quote Black:

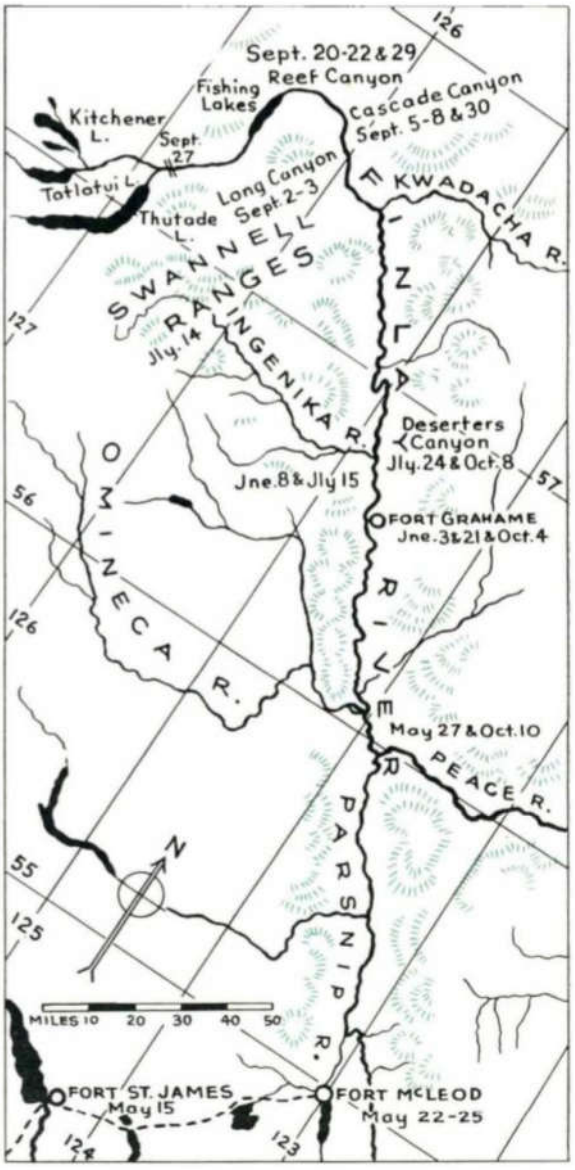
"June the 10th. This morning Le Guard came back he slept without his Blank[et] or any thing to eat, he says he went on untill he came to a place between *Walls* of Rock out of the power of man to go up with a Canoe . . . and that man never passed here before. . . . I set off with Le Prise to follow the right [bank] passed a very Rapid River [Thudaka] by throwing down a pine Tree over it . . . passed two Cascades but a place to carry in . . . arrived at a horrid Chasm, the River confined into a narrow Stream as white as snow, rising its Watery Vapours in the air."

Reef Canyon is 2½ miles long. We took three days to get through it. Black made portages, one of 70 paces, another of 60 paces, a third of unspecified length and a final one of 1,450 paces. He had nine men and a large birchbark canoe and his portages involved cutting a "road" over which to carry the canoe. According to my memory we carried our load up and over some jutting crags, but except at one bad cascade, lined and dragged the empty canoe somehow in the water; or scrambled above the cliffs and dropped a line tied to a float and picked it up below. The dug-out canoe was far too heavy for us to get up a steep slope.

Nep Yuen and George Copley use the Spanish windlass to drag the canoe uphill at Deserters' Canyon.

Making the cottonwood dugout canoe at Fort Grahame in 1913. Jim Alexander hollows out the bow.

Steaming the canoe to spread it. It is half filled with water which is heated with hot stones. The sides are then forced apart by thwarts.



We reached the Fishing Lakes on September 22. They are merely sluggish reed-choked reaches 300 yards in width and 5 miles long; the mud beaches trampled like a barnyard by caribou, although we saw none. Above them the river again became a swift-flowing stream full of gravel-bars and canyons.

Our final camp was at Delta Creek, 14 miles above the canyons, where the river was only 40 yards wide. A scant thirty miles farther would have brought us to Thutade Lake, the head of the great Mackenzie River and some 2,500 miles from its mouth. But our food was now mainly dried moosemeat, the river was rapidly getting worse, and the weather cold and stormy, so we decided to abandon the survey and turn back.

"Sunday Sept. 27th 5 am; 39°: noon; 49°: 5 pm; 47°. George and Jimmy today laboriously hewed out two boards ten inches wide, each from a separate spruce tree, à la Robinson Crusoe. These were nailed to the gunwales with a flare outboard, so as to give us more free board and save us from swamping in the canyons below. Sugar and oatmeal play out." Next day we commenced the long voyage to Peace River Crossing.

"Monday 28th 5 am; 35°: noon; 42°: 5 pm; 39°: Day 151: Camp 86. Rain and snow nearly all day and night and most exceedingly miserable in canoe.

"Sept. 29, 1914, run clear down to a mile below the Thudaka in six frantic hours. Reef Canyon very bad and Kodak Cascade worse. A big wave came up intermittently at the foot of the cascade. We had run ashore above to size up the situation and hoped to time our plunge so as to miss the wave. However, we miscalculated and the wave curled up as we struck the eddy. I, in the bow, had it break over my head. It was fully six-foot high and the smother ran the length of the canoe, half-filling it. We shipped six inches of water and had to get ashore in a hurry before we swamped."

(Note by Copley, 1945: "We had sized up this place from above and Jimmy wanted Nep Yuen to go ashore and walk down to where we could pick him up. He refused point-blank, said he might as well get drowned with us as see us drown and die of cold and starvation, himself. He lay down in the bottom of the canoe and shut his eyes.")

"Worst water I ever saw but we had no option. It had to be run, lining or dropping down with the pole being impossible."

At a bad place lower down an acute turn had to be made directly in the face of a cliff onto which the current impinged violently. Jimmy did not think he could make it, and shouted to me to stop the canoe with the pole, by tilting like a knight of old at the cliff. The impact threw me overboard, pole and all, but George grabbed me and hauled me back on board.

This is what Black says of his experience here. "Sept. 10th [1824] . . . arrived at the long Portage [1450 paces], a little difficult to arrive at . . . made ½ of the Portage & put up for the Night, the waters of the River is very much fallen but at this place being contracted into a narrow space between perpendicular Walls of Rock, its not much better than in high water & can scarcely be run down light."

Swannell log again, September 30th, 1914: "5 am; 30°: heavy frost: noon; 44°: 5 pm; 41°. Make to swift water below Cascade Canyon. Drop to a bit above the cascades along shore with line. Rather a ticklish crossing from the left bank to the other side. We might have run it on the right side but two big waves would have half-filled the canoe. Dropped down the bad water to the top of main cascade on the line and nearly swamped. Strike rocks twice in rapids below. George is dragged into the river while ashore on the line, but Jimmy hauls him out, reeling him like a fish.

"Oct. 1st: 5 am; 36°: noon 48°: 5 pm; 41°. . . . Get through Long Canyon without incident. At the foot of the canyon we run ashore to investigate a red flag hung on a sweeper to attract our attention by some trapper who knew we were above. It had, tied to the tree, wrapped in canvas, an August newspaper with huge headlines announcing the DECLARATION OF WAR!" Had this not been a newspaper we would have thought it a hoax; as our last word from the outside world had been at Fort St. James in mid-May. The war might be over by now, for all we knew.

"Oct. 3rd. 5 am; 31°: noon; 42°: 5 pm; 41°: Camp 91: Day 155. Reach Deserters' Canyon 11 am. and run through with the whole load except blanket-rolls. Nep Yuen is very angry with me because I put him ashore at the head of the canyon to cook lunch, so he missed the fun of running through. . . . The water at the foot must be 25 ft. lower.

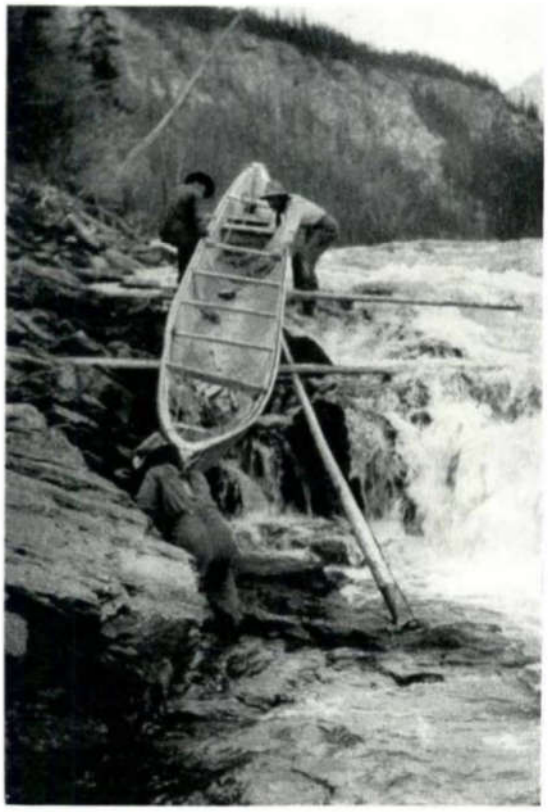
"Sunday 4th. Arrive at Fort Grahame 2 pm. . . . The factor shows me the B.L.O. Journal for 1898 (Bear's Lake Outpost was the old name for this place) chronicling the invasion of the Klondikers.

"Oct. 10th. 5 am; 26°: heavy frost. . . . Run Finlay Rapids of the Peace River purely to obtain photos; but Copley, as photographer, stationed on a boulder, is so entranced at our speed that he stares open-mouthed and forgets to trip shutter. So we obligingly line back and repeat—after threatening Copley with a watery grave if he fails again!"

On Oct. 11 Jimmy Alexander left on foot cross-country to Fort St. James. On the 12th we three others went down the Peace, portaged the Rocky Mountain Canyon, and reached the booming town of Peace River Crossing on Oct. 29. All told we had gone 1,200 miles by dug-out canoe.

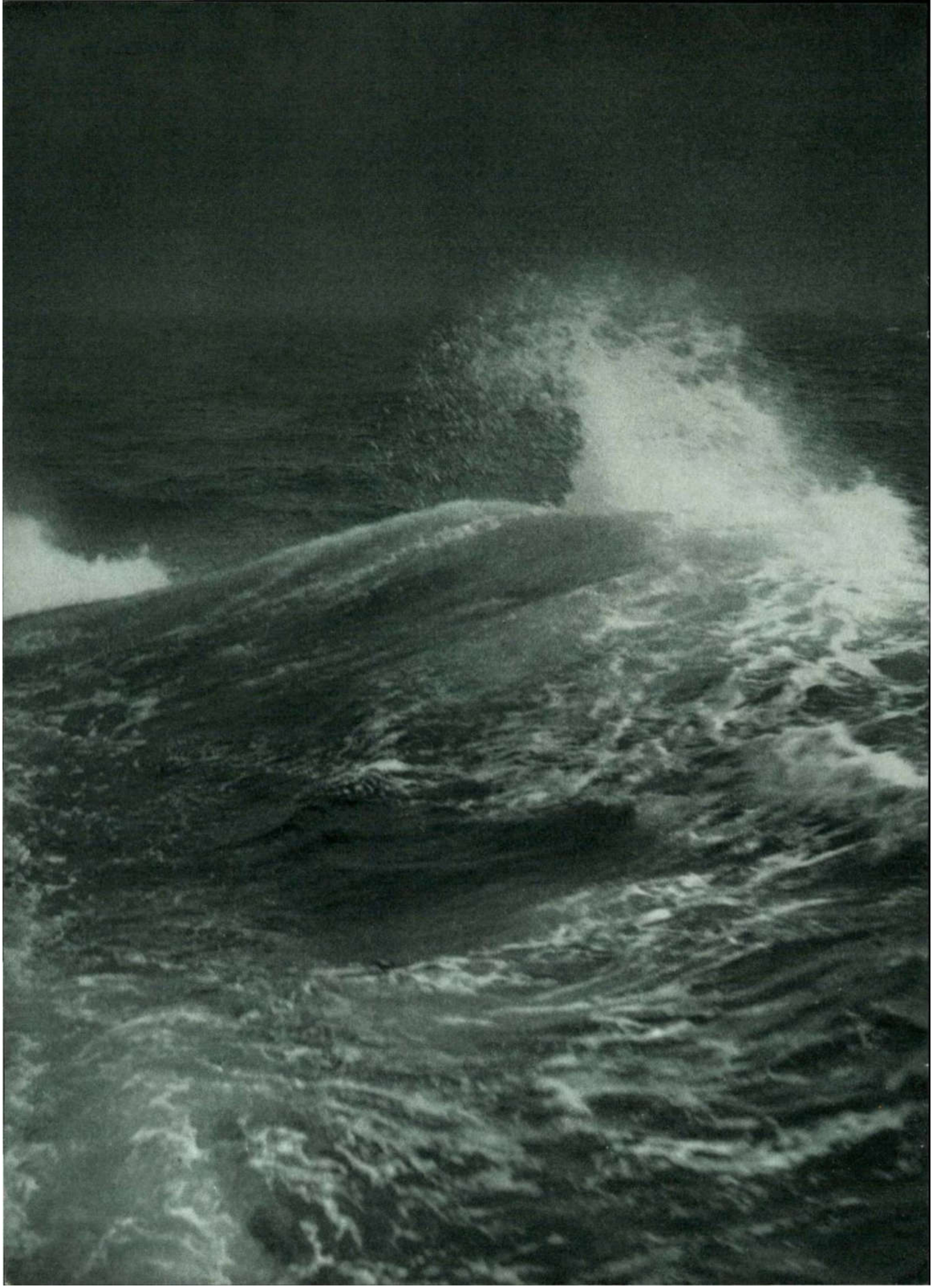
So ended the trail by water with all the excitement and hazards of the Upper Finlay behind us. Four years of war and ten subsequent years were to pass before I again saw the Finlay and at long last reached and mapped Lakes Thutade, Tatlatui and Kitchener, the headwaters of the great Mackenzie. ◆

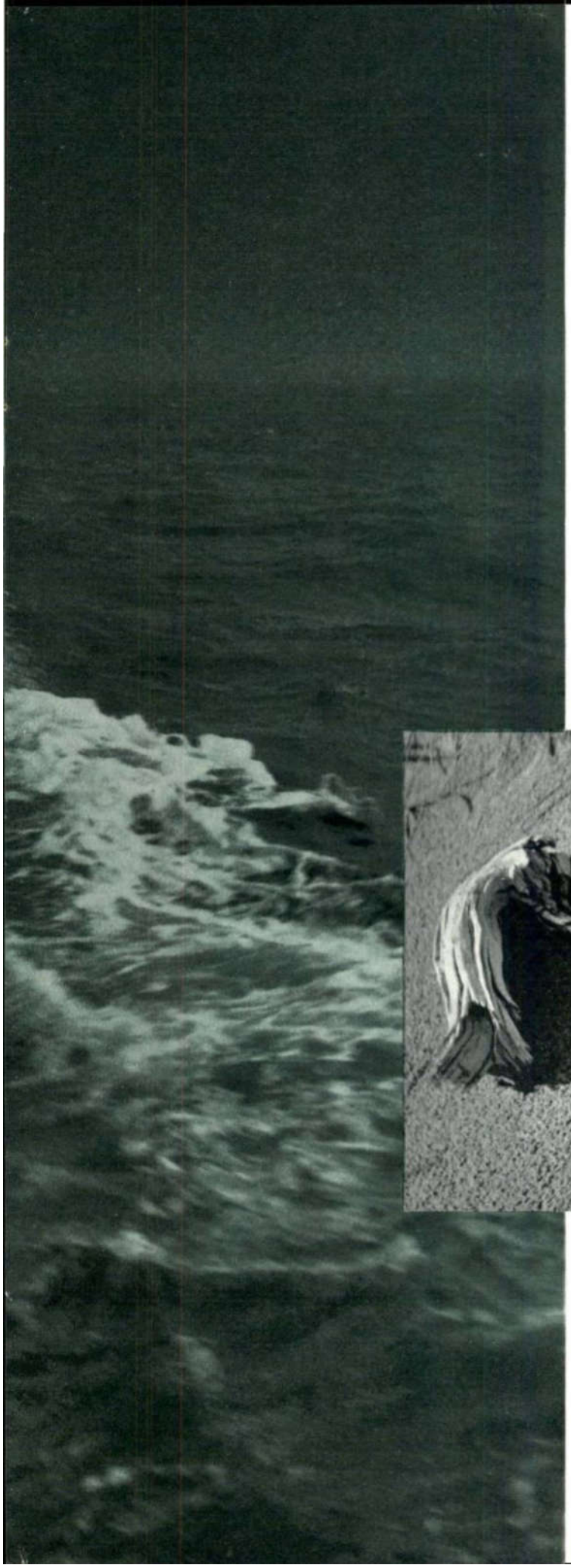
How Reef Canyon was run: Put in at A and dropped through on the pole by way of a narrow channel to B. At foot of cataract C a 6-foot wave broke over Swannell's head in the bow, and they shipped 6 inches of water. Below rock E the currents merged, and they kept on the water ridge, the left channel being impossible.



Portaging up Cascade Canyon on September 5. Swannell's and Black's parties are the only ones known to have navigated the Big Bend of the Finlay.

Poling a dugout canoe (not on the Finlay).





Since the close of the last great ice age the land south of Hudson Bay, depressed under the crushing weight of ice, has been slowly rising towards its original level. So far, this has pushed the south shore of the Bay back north about fifty miles. Forest follows closely the retreat of the sea, the spruce and tamarack trees growing tall and straight in a deep mat of lichens on the old beach ridges, and grotesquely stunted in the poorly drained troughs between. But the forest never quite overtakes the Bay. Always separating them is a narrow strip of tundra; a naked, lonely, but far from barren land.

RETREAT OF THE SEA

PHOTO BY MAX SAUER

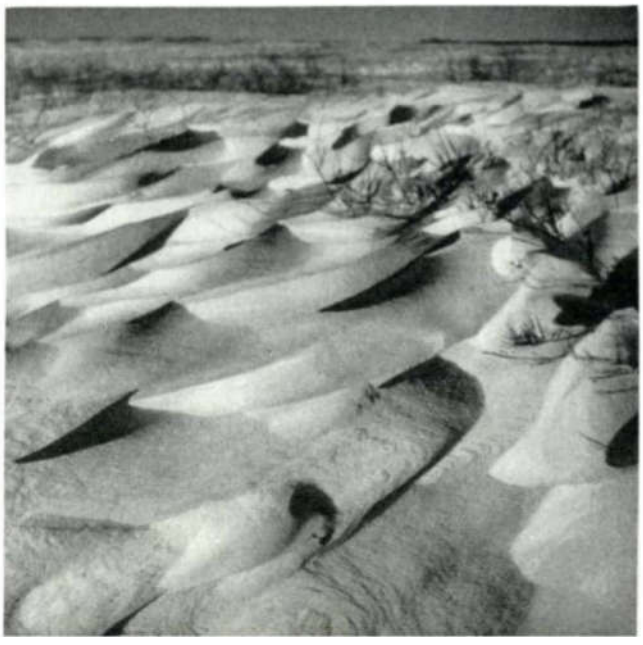
These studies were made in the neighbourhood of Fort Severn.

by JOHN MACFIE

Mr. Macfie is a Wildlife Management officer in the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, based at Sioux Lookout.

Wood and ice are the fabric of nature's fantastic sculpture.

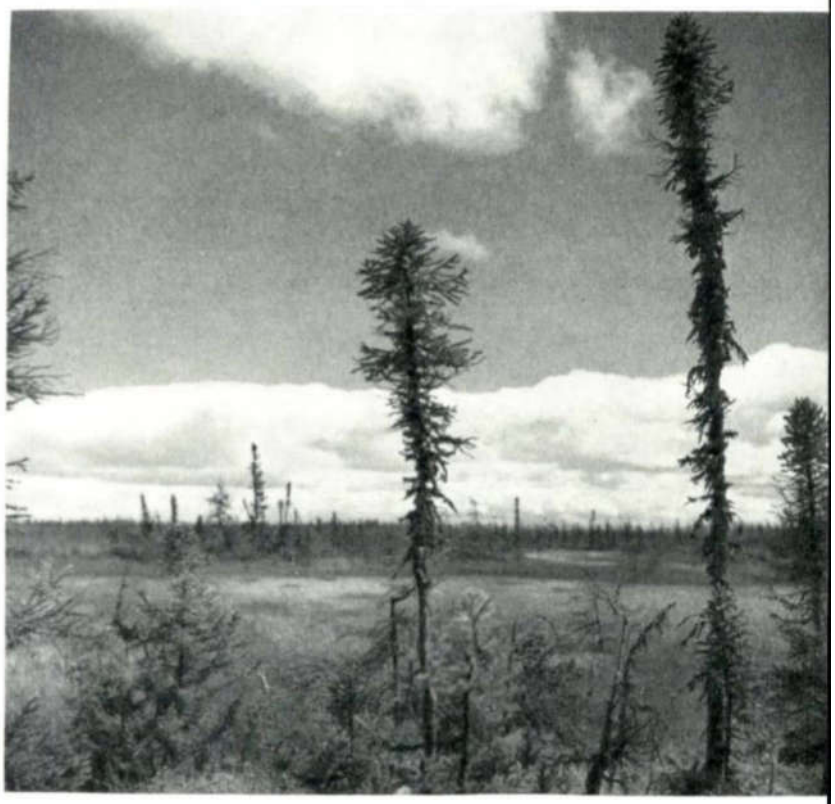
In winter the snow is hammered by the wind to concrete hardness.



In summer, polar bears plod unmolested across the sands.

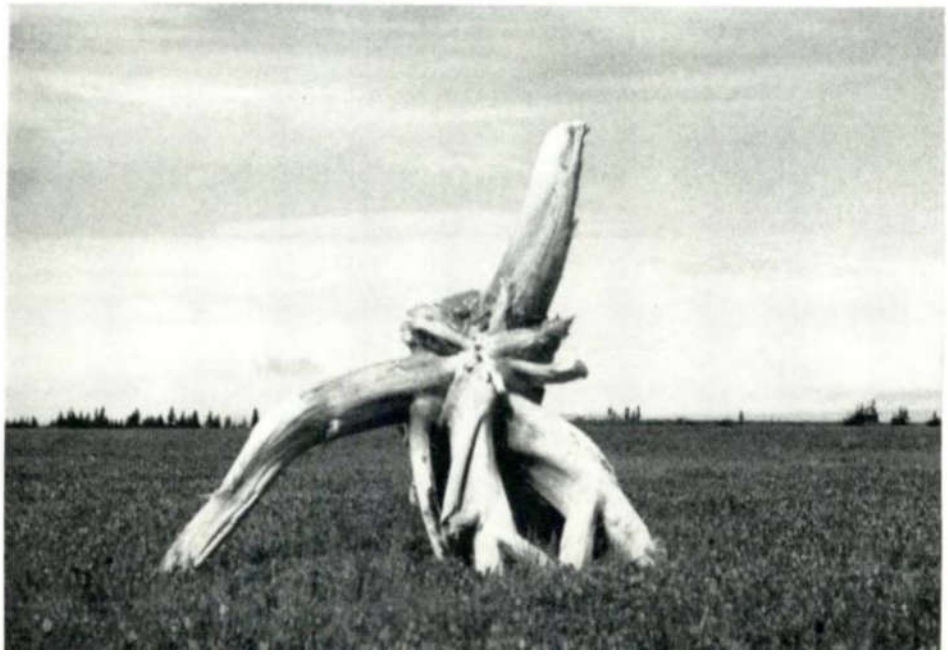
RETREAT OF THE SEA

Half a mile inland the wreckage of an old sailing ship is strewn over miles of sandy ground that was once the shore of Hudson Bay.



Right: A thousand years ago this was a salt water lagoon flanked by gravel bars. As the land rose, it evolved through slough and marsh to muskeg.

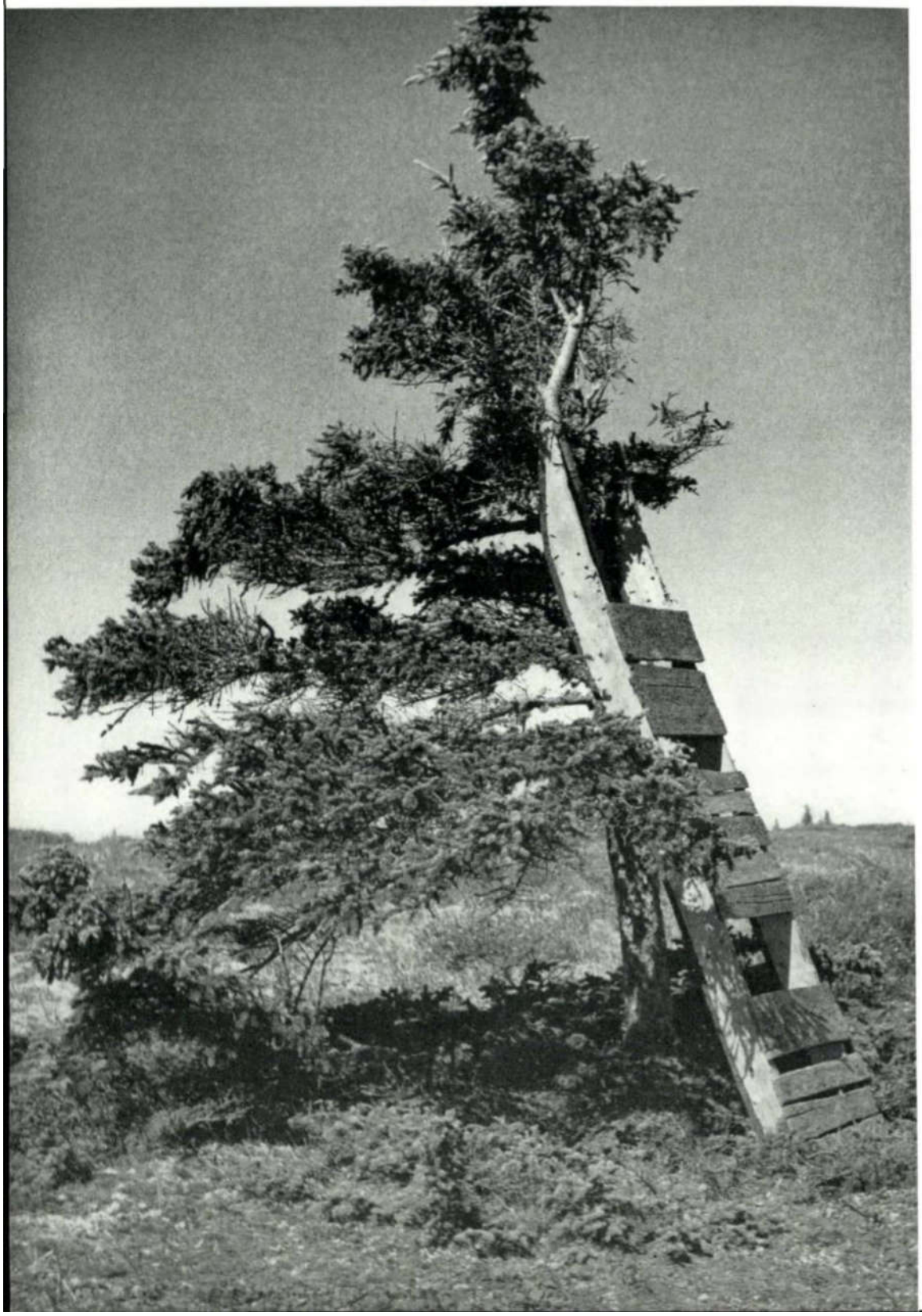
Below: Roots and whole trees torn from river banks pour into Hudson Bay with each spring break-up and eventually come to rest as bleached and polished driftwood.



RETREAT OF THE SEA

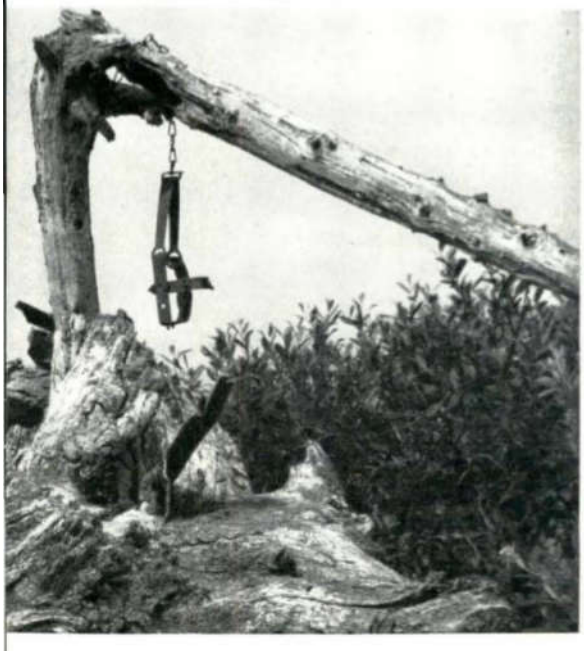
The mother of this arctic fox pup dug her many-tunnelled den in loose beach sand, under the protection of timbers from the wrecked ship.

Below: A cached sled marks the place where a Cree Indian family has left the coast to go hunting in the forest. In winter, canoes and outboard motor will take its place.

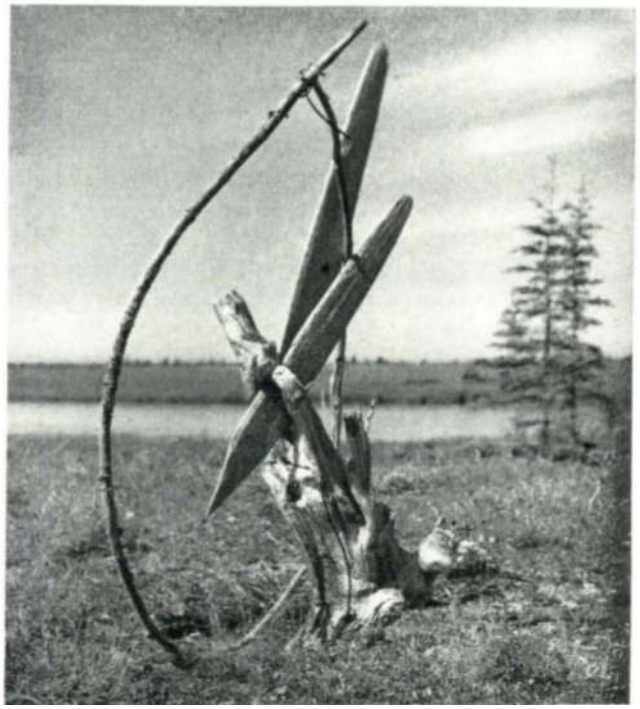


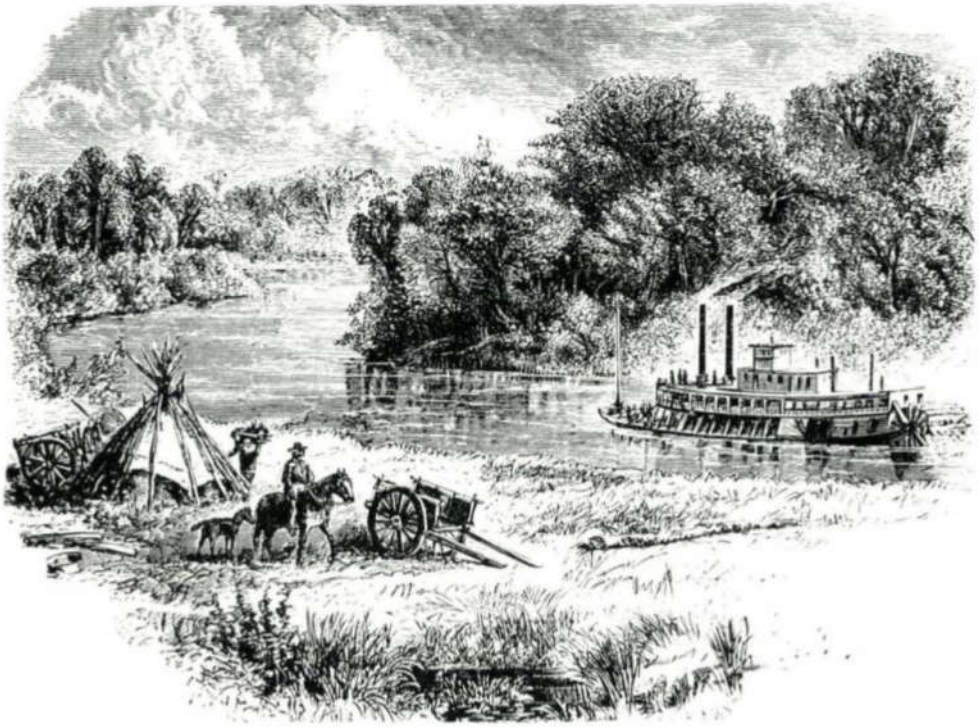
Traps for arctic foxes

or snowy owls are cached close to the seashore.



Tundra abstract—pelt stretchers and driftwood.





Railways connected with Red River carts and sternwheelers to bring goods from the seaboard to Fort Garry via St. Paul. A scene on the upper Red.

In the late 1850s the Hudson's Bay Company began to abandon the historic York Factory route to Lake Winnipeg in favour of that via St. Paul and the Red River.

THE MINNESOTA ROUTE

by Alvin C. Gluek, Jr.

Dr. Gluek is an instructor in history at Michigan State University. He is specially interested in Canadian-American relations of the Midwest.

AFTER the merger of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, the surviving London concern thoroughly reorganized the transportation system serving the Northern Department of Rupert's Land. Thereafter, the long and costly canoe route from Montreal—in part, the undoing of the Nor'Westers—was largely employed in the carriage of mail and personnel.[1] The shorter path from York Factory to Fort Garry became the trunk-line of the Northern Department. Without competition, the York route functioned admirably; but when an American road arose to challenge its supremacy, it began to break down, unable to match either the capacity or the economy of its new rival. To preserve its position in the fur trade, the Hudson's Bay Company was forced to turn southward and open up the Minnesota route.

Composed of the various Red River trails, the American road integrated the transportation systems and the markets of Rupert's Land and the American Northwest. In the 1840s, it was the midwife at the birth of the free trade movement, conveying the goods and cash with which Americans underwrote the free traders of the Red River Settlement. The result was an illicit

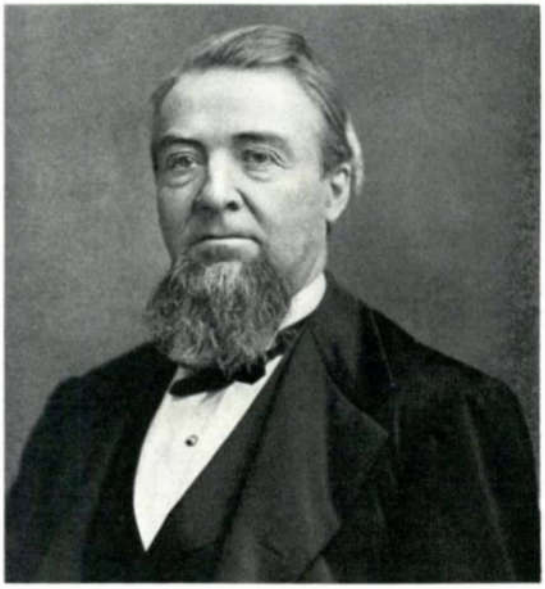
1. See *Beaver*, Sept. 1944, M. Barbeau, "Country-made Trade Goods."

trade in furs which the Hudson's Bay Company could not halt; and after the Sayer trial of 1849, the Company had to fall back upon its "superior means in the way of trade to secure even a portion of the furs hunted in the disturbed parts of the country."

There seemed no way of preventing the free trade movement. The Company could only hope to stunt its growth by strengthening its trading posts on the American frontier and by underselling the independent merchants within the Red River District. It was an expensive policy but apparently an effective one. At first, the free trade movement did not expand beyond the critical district; and within it, the Company seemed to be gaining ground. But progress was achieved at great cost. The high prices at Fort Garry drew furs from all the adjoining districts; and although the returns of the Red River District mounted annually, so did its indents. The York route began to labour under burdens that grew heavier by the year.

And then, in an irresistible surge of power, the free trade movement suddenly broke out of the Company's net. Stretching north and west, the advocates of "free enterprise" thrust into the districts of Swan River, Cumberland, and Saskatchewan. By 1854, one of them had penetrated the English River District "immediately beyond which . . . [lay] the most valuable fur district in the country—Athabasca and McKenzie river."

In the following year, the Red River District itself was gravely threatened by the appearance of Norman W. Kittson, the American trader most responsible for the development of the entire free trade movement. He had brazenly crossed the international line and bought furs and robes in the very shadow of Fort Garry. But it was more than an invasion of sovereign rights. He not only undersold the Company's own shops but also provided his customers with goods unseen on his competitor's shelves.



J. C. Burbank of St. Paul, who joined with Sir George Simpson in setting up a secret partnership. Minn. Historical Society

Kittson's extraordinary success proved that the York route no longer allowed the Company to compete with a strong rival whose trading goods were brought up from St. Paul. A startling transportation revolution had taken place below the 49th parallel which partially outmoded traffic on Hudson Bay. It was an easy interlocking of three means of transportation: railroads, steamboats, and the humble Red River carts. By 1852, the Chicago and Galena Railroad was completed, the first of several lines to reach the Mississippi River in that decade; and from the water's edge, steamboats carried freight with speed and regularity upriver to St. Paul for seven months of the year—a navigable season nearly twice as long as that of Hudson Bay.[2] From St. Paul, carts crossed the plains to the Red River Settlement on the final leg of a journey that was "considered pleasureable as well as profitable." Small wonder that in 1856 the Governor of Assiniboia wrote London that the goods imported from the United States "cannot now be less than half, and in a few years will probably exceed in value the whole of the Company's [imports] to Red River by way of York Factory."

It was clear that if the Hudson's Bay Company did not maintain the ascendancy of the York route, the trade of Rupert's Land would take the more convenient channel and New York City would replace London as the fur capital of the world. Vain efforts were made to shore up the old route but the load was too great to bear. In itself, the ever growing indent for the Red River District was a heavy burden; but when, in the fall of 1857, the Company tried to take both trading goods and a detachment of the Royal Canadian Rifles down to Fort Garry, the York brigades simply could not carry the load. At best, the route was a laborious one; and now when the problem of supply had reached a crisis, it was impossible to get sufficient crews. The York route had broken down.

2. In 1852, the Governor of Minnesota Territory travelled comfortably from St. Paul to New York City in seven days.

In desperation, the officer in charge of the Red River District suggested that at least a portion of the 1858 indent be sent via St. Paul; and after some consideration, the Company agreed to send a trial shipment of about forty tons. Arrangements were made with the United States Treasury Department to ship in bond and temporary agents were selected at New York City and St. Paul to receive and forward the goods. The shipments were staggered over the summer of 1858; but by mid-September the last of them had arrived safely at Fort Garry.

The experiment was a great success. Although Sir George Simpson regarded the Minnesota route as "no longer a question of relative cost, but of necessity," yet he was delighted to find that its freightage was about 35 to 40 per cent less than the Hudson Bay-York Factory system. And there were other advantages not so apparent to the eye. The route was faster, allowing a saving of about 5 per cent in interest charges and permitting the Company's orders to meet the changing dictates of fashion. And what was more, the free traders had been beaten at their own game. Now the Company's shops were well stocked and attracted crowds; while those of its rivals were deserted, unable to compete in price, quality, or quantity.

The Hudson's Bay Company went ahead with plans for the following year, cutting a transportation pattern to fit the needs of the Red River and the neighbouring districts. With slight

Red River cart brigade on Fort Street, Winnipeg.

variations, the pattern persisted for the next decade. The trading goods from England were borne to Montreal, whence the Grand Trunk Railway, together with its rail and water connections, transported them to St. Paul.[3] There, the goods were handed over to the Burbank brothers, who as "temporary" agents, transmitted them to the Company's cart brigades for the final distance to Fort Garry.

However, there was a chance that the long overland route across the plains might be cut in half. From St. Paul, Simpson learned of various schemes for putting steamboats on the Red River, but he had little confidence that a steamer could be built before the river fell too low for navigation. If he were to use the river at all, he planned to construct bateaux. But if a steamer were built and if it proved a success, he meant to use it. For with steam navigation on the Red River, the cart brigades would run only from St. Paul to the head of navigation; and thus the capacity of the Minnesota route would grow while its costs declined.

While the Company thought in terms of a Minnesota route, Minnesotans were dreaming of highways to the riches of Rupert's Land and the Far West. They had thrilled at the sight of the "trial experiment" passing along the streets of St. Paul, regarding it as "an important testimony

3. For the moment, Montreal and the Grand Trunk had supplanted New York City and the various American railways in the carriage of English goods to St. Paul; but in later years, both the Canadian and the American systems were used, as the Company repeatedly sought to determine which line best served its interests

extorted from the most reluctant of witnesses, to the superiority of this route." A prominent citizen later reminisced:

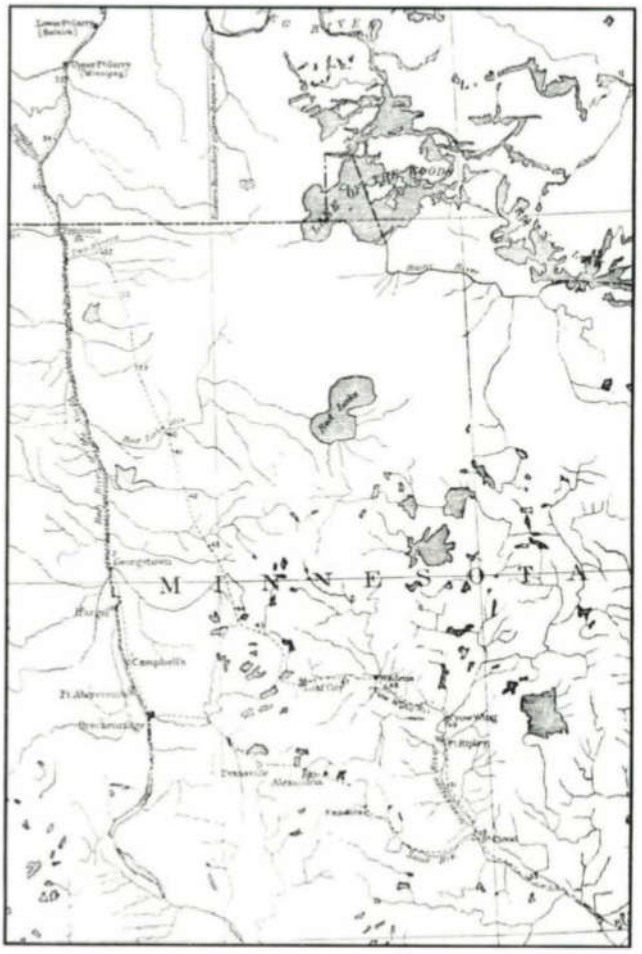
> It is not possible to convey to you the impression made upon our businessmen by this evident good faith and determination of the Hudson Bay Company to abandon York Factory as their route of transportation, together with the determination of the Imperial Government to terminate the exclusive jurisdiction of the Hudson Bay Company in North West British America.
>
> You will recall that this country was suffering from the great financial collapse of 1857, and any change possible for the better was hailed with the earnestness of drowning men.

To Minnesotans, infused with the booster's philosophy of the frontier, it seemed as if a new era had arrived. Seen through their rose-coloured glasses, the *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company* "promised" the immediate opening up of Rupert's Land—and if not another Oregon to populate, then surely a commercial empire to exploit. Thus, the excitement grew when the Company first used the Minnesota route and then soared to frenetic heights when, in the same year, the news reached St. Paul of the Fraser River gold strike.

In the winter of 1858-59, the prophets of St. Paul's destiny convened time and again to expound the material virtues of the British Northwest and to consider ways and means of opening it up to trade and commerce. One result of their endeavours was the formation of a chamber of commerce[4] whose first act was to guarantee $1,000 to a Mississippi river captain, Anson Northup, if he could transport the machinery of his steamboat to the Red River and build a new hull to contain it—and $500 each to the first three men who successfully navigated the river in the following summer.

In the eyes of his admirers, Northup performed an undoubted miracle. He dragged the heavy machinery through heavy snow from Crow Wing to the confluence of the Sheyenne and the Red Rivers; and there, in an incredibly short time, he had completed the hull. On May 19, 1859, the *Anson Northup* slid into the waters of the Red and steamed downstream to Fort Garry. The cannon of the fort and the bells of St. Boniface acclaimed her arrival on 10 June: and a joyous excursion to Lake Winnipeg followed before the steamer returned to the United States and docked at Fort Abercrombie to await her destiny.

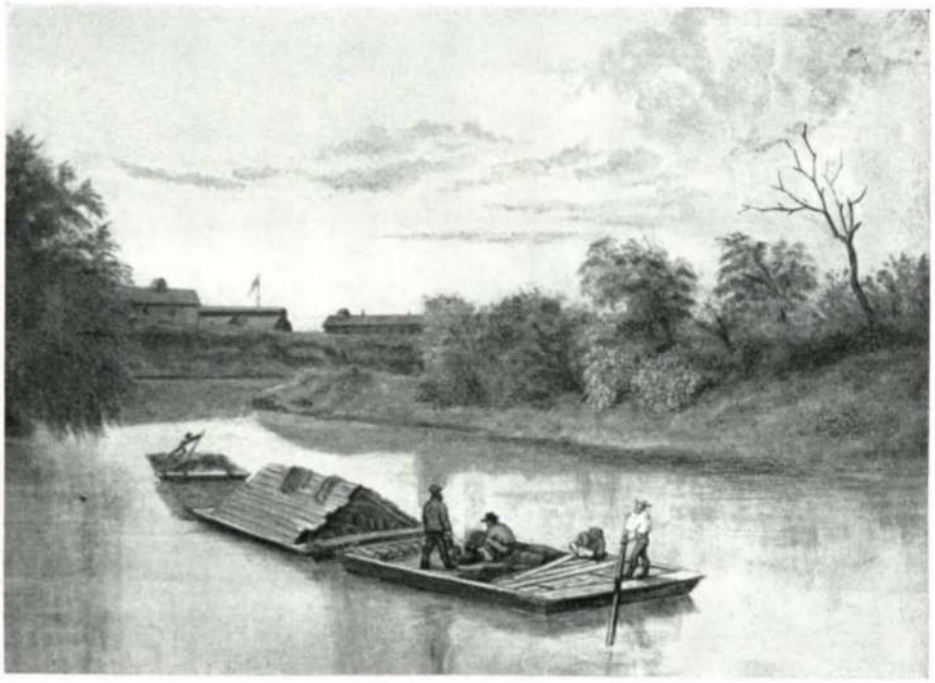
About a fortnight later, Concord coaches, "spacious and comfortable," left St. Paul on a new stage route to Fort Abercrombie. It was a branch line of the Minnesota Stage Company, itself a new concern in which the Burbank brothers were the majority stockholders; and the whole enterprise was occasioned by every man's expectation that Rupert's Land would soon be colonized. In one coach rode three British gentlemen seeking adventure on the Great Plains and in the other two Scottish sisters bound for Fort Chipewyan where one of them was to marry Chief Trader Robert Campbell. They planned to ride as far as Breckenridge and then transfer to the *Anson Northup*. But when they reached the end of the line, they found the steamer but not her owner, for Captain Northup had set out for St. Paul to make up a cargo.



Map from "The Winnipeg Country" by S. A. Scudder, whose route of 1860 is shown. He travelled from St. Paul to Fort Garry by stage coach, Concord wagon, and the "Anson Northup." St. Paul is in the lower right corner.

All Northup's efforts were in vain. He was a foolish man, a penniless soul with visions of a fortune to come. Believing that he had an unassailable monopoly of the river's traffic, he had demanded exorbitant freight rates. But Simpson refused to pay them and proceeded to call Northup's poor hand by getting ahead with his own project for building bateaux. What else could the captain do but throw down his cards? His pockets were empty and he knew that the

4. J. C. Burbank was a director of the new St. Paul Chamber of Commerce.



Flatboats on the Red River, by Frank Lynn.
Courtesy Edward Eberstadt & Sons, N.Y.

venture would never pay without the Company's patronage. Thus, he was easily "induced" by Simpson to sell out for $8,000 to a secret partnership consisting of the Company and the Burbank brothers.

The Company was a silent partner, its interests best served by the fiction of American ownership. As the legal proprietors of the vessel, the Burbanks enabled the Company to get around an American statute that prohibited it from owning property in the United States. As managers of the line, the Burbanks agreed to carry the Company's goods for five years at "very moderate" rates. True, to escape public censure, they would also have to carry freight for the independent merchants of the Red River Settlement, but at rates nearly 100 per cent greater than those charged the Company—a difference readily concealed by a secret partnership.

Before returning to Lachine, Sir George completed the Company's transportation system in Minnesota. Land was indirectly acquired and a port established at Sheyenne, later renamed Georgetown. In the succeeding seasons, the operations of this station expanded until it possessed dormitories, warehouses, a saw and a grist mill as well as extensive acreage for the production of fodder. It was the vital point of transshipment between the Red River carts and the *Anson Northup*. Moreover, it allowed the Company "to carry on the Indian trade . . . upon [its] own premises *without a license*."

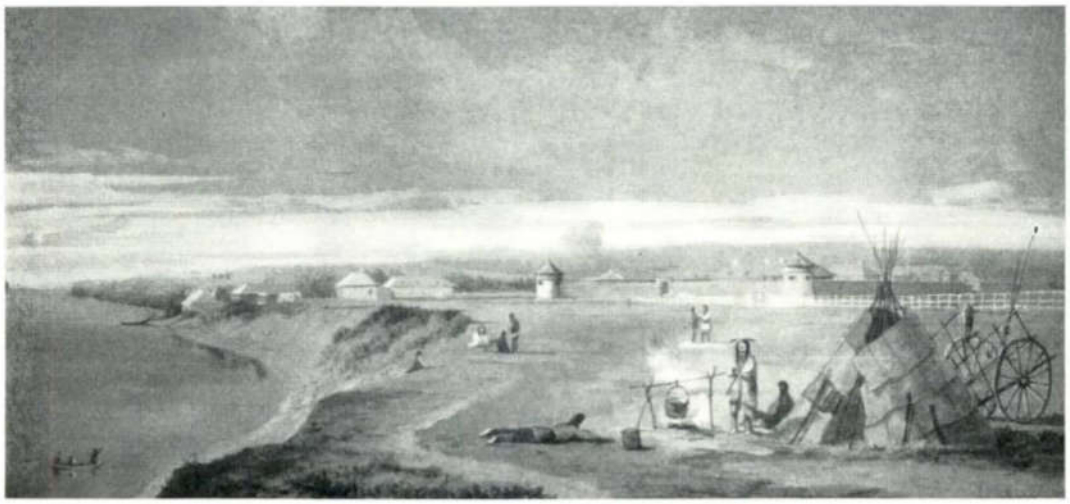
The Governor and Committee were delighted with the results of the 1859 season. The arrangements with the Grand Trunk had been more than satisfactory; the freightage on English goods to St. Paul was much less than that to York Factory. But in the stretch beyond St. Paul, the route was not as successful. The Red River proved to be a fickle stream whose water level was never constant; and with low water and unforeseen transshipments, the costs slightly exceeded those from York Factory to Fort Garry. Nonetheless, the route gave great satisfaction, for all the goods had arrived within time and without property damage.

In his original conception of the Minnesota route, Simpson had thought in terms of a system manned and managed entirely by servants of the Company. He had advised against employing Americans, "whose desire to push business frequently exceeds their means to fulfill their engagements." His attitude soon changed. "Temporary" agents in 1858, the Burbank brothers had become "partners" in the following year; and during the summer of 1859, J. C. Burbank began suggesting to Simpson the wisdom of an expanded economic alliance. Many letters from St. Paul

were followed by a whirlwind visit to Lachine in November—and the adroit Yankee salesman had the old gentlemen convinced of the folly of an all-Company line.

Burbank took Simpson "rather by surprise" with a proposition that required an answer in three days' time. Unable to write London for advice, he bound the Company to a fateful contract in which the Burbanks agreed to freight 250 tons of the Company's goods annually from St. Paul to Fort Garry. He regarded the terms as favourable to the Company's interests. The costs of building a highway system would be assumed by the Burbanks, who would probably shift much of it to the state of Minnesota. As soon as all the Company's transport below the border could be entrusted to Americans, he favoured limiting the Company's efforts to Rupert's Land. Then, with wondrous sleight of hand, he illustrated how "the contract price of $4 per 100 lbs. differ[ed] little from the estimate of $3 per 'piece' of 90 @ 100 lbs."

During the next years, the route was completely established. In a remarkably efficient manner, the Minnesota Stage Company transported the goods up from St. Paul and transshipped them to the steamboat at Georgetown. Even the Red River co-operated, providing sufficient water for the *Anson Northup* and her successors: the *Pioneer* (the *Anson Northup*, refurbished and renamed) and the *International*. By 1861, St. Paul had become a second "York Factory," meeting all the needs of the Red River, Saskatchewan, and Swan River Districts.



Fort Garry in 1869 by William Armstrong. Comparison with photographs by H. L. Hime taken ten years earlier shows that he has copied the Upper Fort from one, and the buildings on the left from a photo of Lower Fort Garry.
Public Archives of Canada.

And yet the flaw in the contract began to undermine the relationship between the Burbanks and the Company. There was a fundamental difference in the interests of the two parties—a difference which an ex-stockholder of the Minnesota Stage Company later explained: "We wanted immigration and trade; they did not want immigration nor mails nor any one to trade in the Hudson Bay Company's territories but themselves. The expectation that the country would be opened proved a delusion." In truth, although the Burbanks were the partners of the Hudson's Bay Company, they also carried on their own forwarding and commission business in the Red River Settlement. Moreover, their fleet of common carriers was patronized by the free traders of Rupert's Land. It was impossible to serve two masters, and the Company justifiably complained that its business was not always given priority. But the chief bone of contention was the steamboat about whose schedule there was constant bickering. In 1862, with low water, the Company wanted to lay it up when all its goods had reached Fort Garry; while the Burbanks preferred to keep it running in order to get "public confidence in the route." Convinced that its partners were "acting more with a view to the interests of the Minnesota Stage Company than those of the Steam-

boat Company," the Company demanded its own way. But, in the end, it was the Sioux, and not the Company, who laid up the *International*.

The last shipment for Fort Garry was not carried on the *International* that year, or for many seasons thereafter. The vessel was effectually halted, first by the Sioux Uprising, and then by the Red River itself. In the fall of 1862, the Sioux cut all communication lines between Fort Garry and the United States. Drivers of the Minnesota Stage Company were slain and their way stations burnt, as the Indians reduced the Red River Valley to "almost a perfect state of desolation" and rolled back the general frontier to within a warwhoop of St. Cloud. In the following summer, the Burbanks refused to risk their personnel on the road between St. Cloud and the Red River. Indeed, they regarded the Sioux affair as an act of God which released them from their contract. And to complicate matters, the Red River reverted to nature, its shallow waters imprisoning the *International* at Fort Abercrombie. The Company had to resort again to the Red River cart trains, a "clumsy, slow, and expensive process" but one that brought all the goods to Fort Garry. Needless to say, when the Burbank contract expired in the fall, it was not renewed.

The Sioux Uprising ushered in an era of troubles for the Minnesota route. The stretch beyond St. Cloud remained a crucial matter, complicated by the Minnesotans' fear of the Sioux, the continued low state of the Red River, and a steamboat that was too long and drew too much for that shallow, meandering stream. Strangely enough, the Company added to its own difficulties by making a second contract, much like that of the Burbanks, with a group of American shippers

Fort Abercrombie, from Harper's Magazine of 1860.

from St. Cloud. And like the Burbanks, these contractors also failed, for the Civil War and the Indian scare made it impossible for them to get enough servants to man the route beyond St. Cloud. Under the circumstances, it was only natural that the Company should look elsewhere for relief. The possibility of a road from Lake Superior to the Red River was seriously considered; but when an agreement was finally reached with the interested American parties, the Company's enthusiasm for the route had vanished. Examination had revealed that the Superior road could never be as good as the Minnesota route; and after the railroads reached St. Cloud in 1867, no Lake Superior village could hope to compete in the carriage of goods to Fort Garry.

For the balance of the decade, there was no difficulty in transporting goods to Georgetown; the trick was in bringing them downstream to Fort Garry. Low water continued to plague the *International*, often forcing the Company to lay her up by the middle of June. Just as the Board decided (1869) that she did not fit the Red River, the rains came—and came—and the vessel gained a reprieve. In fact there was so much rain that while the *International* revelled in water, the overland freight bogged down in the mud. In 1870, the "year of decision" for Rupert's Land, it is ironical to note that the *International* probably made more voyages in a single summer than she had ever made in her entire history.

A new era was at hand. In the spring of 1870, the Company received an offer from a young St. Paul merchant. He was "Jim" Hill, his star just rising; but his books already carried the accounts of both Bishop Taché and Alexander Begg. He offered to carry all the Company's freight from New York City to Fort Garry at a price far below the prevailing rates. But the contract was rejected, for the Company knew that within a year or so the American railroads would strike the Red River Valley and end forever the Red River trails between St. Cloud and Georgetown. ♦

SIMPSON AS BANKER

AT the time the Minnesota Route was opened between St. Paul and Fort Garry, Sir George Simpson and Rt. Hon. Edward "Bear" Ellice (Beaver *Summer 1954*) *decided it would be advantageous to establish a bank at St. Paul. These letters from Simpson to Governor Ramsey of Minnesota, now held by the Minnesota Historical Society, tell the first part of the story, but unfortunately we know of none which show what happened to the project.*

Edited by Grace Lee Nute

Hudsons Bay House
Lachiene 3. November 1858

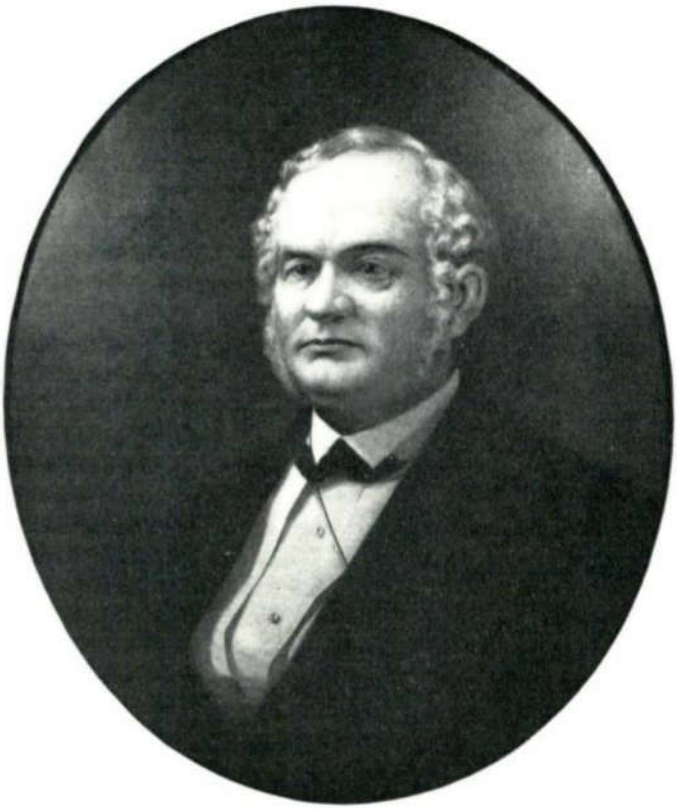
My dear sir,

During our recent visit to Saint Paul, the attention of my fellow traveller, the Right Honble. Edward Ellice, and myself was drawn to the apparent deficiency of banking capital and accommodation at that growing place. It appeared to us that, a good opening presented itself for the profitable enployment of capital and we have accordingly come to the determination of ourselves establishing a Bank in Saint Paul next year.

Mr. Ellice is to give $50,000 in the name of his son, Mr. Edward Ellice Junr. (Member of Parliament); I have subscribed a like sum, and a few of our friends have made up $50,000 more;—in all, $150,000 as a beginning. We should increase our capital to $500,000 and further as the business might require.

We are rather at a loss on what basis to establish our Bank; whether under a Charter or as a private concern. There would be a good deal of formality to go through in obtaining an Act of Incorporation & probably some delay, both of which we should be glad to avoid.—If chartered, our Bank would be under Government control, which, besides restricting the rate of discount &c, might otherwise hamper our operations;—the only return, I believe, being the right to circulate notes.—We are, on the whole, rather disposed to do business as capitalists,—lending money on real and personal security and doing general banking business, *without* circulating notes of our own.—

Is there in Minnesota any General Banking Law, limiting the liability of partners in private banks? Suppose we had several, say 25 partners, how could we sue and be sued?; could we plead in the name of a firm, or must the name of each individual partner be given? If chartered, we might use the corporate name & be represented by our Cashier or President,—at least I presume such would be the case under your laws.—I should feel much obliged if you would favor us with your valuable opinion on this point and also with any hints for our guidance, which your experience might suggest.



Governor Alexander Ramsay of Minnesota, whom Simpson asked to join the board of the bank he proposed to establish in St. Paul.
Minnesota Historical Society

Our Staff, in the first instance, would consist of a Cashier and Clerk, assisted by a local Board of Direction. The Agent of the Hudsons Bay Company at Saint Paul, who would be one of our Superior officers (I think I may say that measure is now decided on) would be one of our Directors. It would be gratifying to Mr Ellice and myself if you would act as a member of the Board. The duties of the office would not be burdensome, indeed we should not propose the arrangement if likely to occupy much of your valuable time; but we think it important to the prestige and success of the Bank that your name should be associated with it. It might, perhaps, be agreeable to you to take an interest in it as a partner.

It would be desirable to secure as our legal adviser, the leading man in the profession at Saint Paul. Can you recommend any gentleman to us?

Mr. Ellice is about to sail for England, but I shall be in communication with that gentleman on this subject, and will acquaint him with your views, when you may find it convenient to favor me with them.—In the meantime, I shall consult with my friend Mr. Royal Phelps of New York —as I am anxious to have our arrangements completed in time to commence operations next Spring.—

Believe me, My dear sir,
Very faithfully yours
G Simpson

Governor Ramsay
Saint Paul
Minnesota

P.S. I think it may be advisable that the intention to establish a Bank should be kept secret, until we are prepared to go into operation; I shall, therefore, feel obliged by your considering this letter confidential, for your private information only.—It would be advisable to look out for premises at once, and I should be glad to know if there are any you could recommend. The same premises might serve for the Hudsons Bay Company's Agency & the Bank. For the latter, there would be required offices below & a dwellinghouse for the Cashier above. Fireproof vaults &c might be erected after we obtained possession; but the building itself must be of stone or brick, & situated in the best business part of the town. If there be no premises that would suit us in the market, I should be obliged if you would ascertain if we could procure a lot on which to build. —I need hardly recommend that these enquiries should be cautiously made, as if the object of them were known, parties having premises or lots for sale would be disposed to advance their terms. G S

Hudsons Bay House
Lachiene 26. November 1858

My dear sir,

I have the pleasure to acknowledge your valued favor of 15. inst: and am much obliged by the information you convey in reference to the proposed establishment of a Bank at Saint Paul. I am glad to learn you are willing to co-operate in the scheme and can assure you it will afford Mr. Ellice and myself great pleasure to have you connected with the undertaking.

Since I addressed you our scheme has been somewhat modified. We should commence as private bankers or money brokers, pending the organisation of the concern under the Banking Law. We should endeavor to give the Bank a decidedly British character & standing, with a view to the circulation of its notes in the direction of Red River and among emigrants passing through Saint Paul to Fraser River, Oregon & other parts of the Far West. The Capital, at starting, to be $500,000, half paid down, the remainder available in calls of 10 p cent; to be subsequently increased by the issue of new stock, which it is thought would command a premium in the market. No proprietor to hold less than $10,000 of Stock.

The part of your letter to which I am most anxious to reply immediately is that relating to the premises you point out, which from your description & my recollection of them, I think would be well suited to the purpose we have in view,—that is, both for the Hudsons Bay Co: and a Bank. But until I hear further from England, I could not assume the responsibility of renting so expensive a building; although I am unwilling to lose the opportunity of securing it. Do you think you could continue to have the offer of the premises kept open for a few weeks? without, however, committing yourself to the owner or mentioning the names of the parties for whom you are acting. If the banking scheme is to go into immediate operation, I propose taking a run up to Saint Paul this winter, accompanied by the gentleman who will act as Manager; I should then be prepared to decide respecting the renting of the premises. —I shall not fail to give you timely notice of the date I am likely to be at S. Paul, in the hope that, if no very pressing engagement called you from home, I might have the pleasure of meeting you. Meantime,

Believe me, My dear sir,
Very truly Yours
G Simpson

Alexander Ramsey Eq
Saint Paul
Minnesota

Hudsons Bay House
Lachiene 27. December 1858

My dear sir,

I have the pleasure to acknowledge your favor of 14. inst: and feel much obliged by the trouble you have taken in reference to keeping open the offer of the Lease of the premises in Saint Paul, which you suggested as suited for a Bank and Agency for the Hudsons Bay Company.—I regret that I am not prepared to close any bargain respecting them, as it would be premature to saddle oursleves with so expensive an establishment until our plans are more matured.—I am in correspondence with my friends in England in reference to both of the proposed schemes, and am in hopes matters may be settled in sufficient time to commence banking operations early in the Spring. Pending the adjustment of some of the arrangements, it would be useless for me to visit Saint Paul; I still, however, entertain the intention of taking a run thither [illegible] in the course of the present winter. I do not think I could leave this [place] before the middle of February. I observe you are to leave for Philadelphia &c, about the end of January. but you do not mention what length of absence you contemplate. I should be sorry to miss you if I go to Saint Paul; but shall hope to meet you there as I pass on my way to Red River in the month of May.—

Believe me, My dear sir,
Very truly Yours
G Simpson

Alexander Ramsey Eq
Saint Paul
Minnesota

Front Cover

As about 99.99% of our readers are going to wonder what the curious symbols on the cover mean, we had better explain that they spell *Keekeeak*—the Eskimo word for Beaver. These syllabic symbols, invented by Rev. James Evans for the Crees in 1841, have been adapted to the Eskimo tongue; but as there is considerable difference between the speech of a Cree and an Eskimo, a symbol doesn't always have the same sound in both languages. For instance, the Eskimo word for Beaver is *Keegeeak* with a hard *g*: but there is no symbol in the Cree syllabics for *g*, they have to substitute *k*. The same word is used for a nail and when you consider the teeth of a beaver, you understand why the Eskimos gave such a name to this strange woodland animal.

500 Tomahawks (Cont'd)

When we ran that packet note in last summer's issue about the Chicago firm who wanted us to supply 500 tomahawks, we didn't dream that anyone would take us up on it. But someone did. In July we heard from one of our subscribers, Mr. E. L. Fenstermaker of Lancaster, Pa., who said he had dug up many thousands of Indian relics in his neighbourhood, and actually had a set of brass patterns and core boxes for "two authentic French-Canadian tomahawks."

We therefore put him in touch with the Chicago firm, and he is now filling orders for them. Mr. Fenstermaker supplies the cast-iron heads (the originals were hand-forged steel) and an Indian in South Dakota makes handles for them. But just to make sure that in years to come nobody will think they are "genuine antiques," the heads are stamped ELF 5126.

Verdict of the Chicagoans: "The tomahawks are terrific!"

Peter Fidler

Peter Fidler, 18th century surveyor and explorer, is one of the "forgotten" men of western history. As he was active at the same time as the great David Thompson of the North West Company the tendency is to draw a parallel between them. W. S. Wallace points out that after the Union of the Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company it was Fidler's maps that were sent to London while Thompson's great map stayed in Canada. And Arthur S. Morton, in his *Under Western Skies*, suggests that although Thompson was "the most intellectual of the wintering partners of the North West Co." Fidler took a more intelligent interest in his surroundings than Thompson did, and was probably a man of more culture; for despite his arduous travels under often primitive conditions, he managed to assemble a collection of some 500 books, which became the nucleus of the Red River Settlement library. Some of these travel-stained volumes, rebound in dressed deerskin, are now in the library of Hudson's Bay House.

"Fidler was no less industrious than Thompson," says Morton, "in keeping his diary and placing on record his surveys and explorations, for in his will which survives, he left four or five vellum-bound volumes, a fair copy of the narrative of his journeys, and with them his astronomical, meteorological, and thermometrical observations and his manuscript maps, to the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company. These are carefully preserved in the Archives of the Company but have not yet been published. The result is that at present Thompson is the great man and Fidler a comparatively obscure figure."

However, he emerged from obscurity for a brief spell last November, when the press carried the story of a monument unveiled in his memory at Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, by the Government of Canada.

Repeat

A name celebrated in the annals of Arctic exploration will once more be heard aboard a naval vessel this summer as she noses through the ice of the Canadian Arctic; for Capt. Thomas Charles Pullen, R.C.N., will command H.M.C.S. *Labrador* when she makes her annual patrol.

Belonging to a family which has had at least one member in naval service for five generations, Capt. Pullen is the grandnephew of Lieut. (later Vice-Admiral) W. J. S. Pullen who searched for Franklin along the western Arctic coast in 1849-50 (*Beaver* March & June 1947) and who in 1852-4 commanded H.M.S. *North Star* as a base vessel at Beechey Island. (*Beaver* June 1949, p. 46 and Spring 1955, p. 49.) His second-in-command on this later expedition was his younger brother, after whom the new commander of *Labrador* is named. The present Rear-Admiral H. F. Pullen, R.C.N., Flag Officer, Pacific Coast, is his older brother, and is named after another brother of the vice-admiral.

Power Behind the Stone

Eskimo women have long been known as expert seamstresses and workers in skin. They make their menfolks' caribou-skin and sealskin clothes and tents, their harpoon lines and dog-harness. But it isn't generally realized that some of the stone carvings that the men get the credit for are really fashioned by their womenfolk. As it is the man who brings the carving to the trading store, he's the one that gets the credit for it.

We feel that somewhere there's a parallel to this situation among the whites, but we'd just as soon not think too much about that. . . .

Wheat Abroad

In the midst of all the arguments about exporting Canadian wheat, it is interesting to read the report of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, laid before the proprietors on June 28, 1881, in which this passage is found:

"With the object of drawing attention to the capabilities of the country, the Company lately purchased a small quantity of wheat in Manitoba, which they imported through the United States to London. The samples were reported on by Brokers both here, in Liverpool, and in Glasgow, as being wheat of an unusually fine character, and were valued at a considerably higher price than those of any other wheat in the market. A portion of this wheat has also been placed in the hands of an experienced miller, and the flour produced is reported to be 'of fine quality as regards strength with fair colour'."

This was less than five years after the first shipment of prairie wheat to the east had been made. On October 21, 1876, 857 bushels at 80 cents a bushel left Winnipeg for Toronto, consigned to Steele Bros., seedsmen. The Winnipeg *Free Press* took occasion to remark prophetically that Messrs. Higgins & Young, the brokers, "thereby gained the credit of being the first shippers of grain from the Province of Manitoba—a fact which will be worthy of remembrance when in the not far distant future our shipments amount to millions of bushels."

Minnesota Route

In connection with the Minnesota Route of the 1850s and '60s which Dr. Gluek writes about in this issue, Dr. Neil Morrison of Windsor, Ontario, has sent us the following extract from the *Chatham Planet* of March 11, 1859:

"The London *Herald* publishes a letter from Mr. C. C. Andrews of Minnesota, in which he urges the colonization of British North America. He thinks the Canadians are safe in estimating that in the prairies watered by the Red River and the Assiniboine and the Saskatchewan, they have a west as valuable as Illinois is to New York. He hopes the Grand Trunk Railroad will connect with the one now building in Minnesota, and continue thence to the Pacific as an international road. He says the valley of the Red River of the north, which he visited, is more extensive than the valley of the Nile, and that, if the British government will open up their west to settlement under as favorable a plan as afforded to actual settlers by the pre-emption laws of the United States, civilization will be greatly advanced."

Why?

In these supersonic days, 70 m.p.h. in an aircraft seems almost impossibly slow. But only 35 years ago it seemed to some people almost impossibly fast. At least it did to the residents of Moose Factory in 1920 when the first aeroplane, a flying boat of the Ontario Forestry Service, landed there. True to their respective natures, the white men, and particularly the aircrew, were more excited about it than the Indians.

In the H B C store the pilot was trying to appear as modest as he could about this epoch-making event in the history of the 250-year-old post, but he couldn't help comparing his speed with that of the traditional modes of northern transport. Going up to Simon Smallboy, a veteran river guide, he asked how long it usually took *him* to come by canoe from the railhead.

"About four-five days," said Simon.

"Well," said the proud pilot, "we just did it in *three hours!*"

"Ye did?" said the old man politely, "Why?"

NORTHERN BOOKS

AYORAMA, by Raymond De Coccola and Paul King. Illustrated by James Houston. Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1955. 316 pages. $4.00.

Reviewed by A. D. Copland

THE authors of this interesting book have done a fine piece of work in bringing to the reading public an authentic account of the daily lives of the primitive Eskimo. Father Raymond, a Corsican by birth and an Oblate Missionary, is a keen observer with a remarkable knowledge of the Eskimo mentality. Paul King, an experienced writer, sets down the story in English in a style well suited to such a narrative. This reviewer would not be expressing the pleasure he derived from reading and re-reading the book without complimenting the authors and the Oxford University Press and, of course, Jim Houston for the excellent drawings.

Readers who may have some difficulty with the title (as this reviewer had until he realized that the Eastern Arctic "*Aongnermut*" may be better understood) will soon know that this simple word encompasses the entire Eskimo philosophy with respect to their lives. Everything that happens—sickness, pain and even death—is regarded by them as inevitable—"it could not be otherwise," and it is a sound philosophy for people who have so little and put up with so much. Time and again the authors point out that here lies the basic difference between the thinking of primitive and civilized man—the unbridgeable gap.

There is a thin thread of a story of Nowyak, a girl born to people who never welcome the birth of a female child and who usually do not make any real effort to ensure that the child will survive the first few days of life. However, Nowyak is spared and occasionally the reader is given a brief account of her childhood, adolescence, marriage and finally her death from the lung-wasting disease that came from the white man.

As a missionary the author is conscious at every turn of the evil influences of certain tribal customs and other barriers that thousands of years have placed between the Eskimo and his acceptance of the Christian teaching. But he deals with them sympathetically. He feels pity but not scorn, but on two occasions he matches the strength of his faith against the arrogant sorcerer Krilalugak who dramatically falls a victim to the sickness he claims he can cure.

There are interesting chapters dealing with travel and hunting, with numerous incidents to show the ability of the primitive Eskimo in mastering his harsh environment. It is not all a grim recital of suffering. There are bright, vividly written pages when the reader will not fail to enjoy the delight of the Eskimo in the simple gatherings and the drum dancing and singing.

But there are distressing things that might puzzle the reader—murders, mercy killings and crimes of passion, with untold suffering through lack of medical help. Happily these conditions are improving; but the change must be slow if we are to preserve intact some of the sterling qualities which these people now possess. This reviewer was intrigued with the account of the birth of a son to the woman Analuak. The child was born outdoors in mid-winter while the others prepared camp for the night. Some people have expressed doubts of such happenings; perhaps the frequent accounts of mercy flights have dulled our sense of proportion and that our inherent fear at childbirth is misplaced when applied to people who so well understand it.

The translations of Eskimo place names are rendered poetically in English, but the Eskimo has no appreciation of this quality of language being more concerned with the practical meaning of the name.

For those of us who were Father Raymond's contemporaries it is a little confusing to find times and places changed, but we must accept the author's explanation that this was done to suit the narrative. Readers do not have to have any knowledge of the Arctic to enjoy this well-written book.

• S/L A. D. Copland served the H B C in Eastern and Western Arctic for some 18 years.

SASKATCHEWAN, The History of a Province, by J. F. C. Wright. McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1955. 291 pages. $5.00.

Reviewed by Grant MacEwan

SASKATCHEWAN'S Jubilee Year program created a new consciousness of the province's rich personality, and Saskatchewan authors and historians did their parts well in achieving that purpose. One of the good efforts was *Saskatchewan, The History of a Province*, authorized by the Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee Committee and written by Jim Wright. The author acknowledges a team effort, "Like many a four-horse team outfit of early prairie days," with Prof. George Simpson of the University of Saskatchewan as adviser, Alexander Robb as research assistant and A. W. Davey as illustrator. To the latter goes credit for a most attractive jacket design and numerous sketches and maps appearing throughout the book.

The book is more informative than analytical and certainly the author seems to have missed very little of known consequence between the recession of the glaciers and the advance of the Saskatchewan Roughriders Rugby Team.

• Mr. MacEwan, alderman of the city of Calgary, is an authority on the history of western agriculture and stock raising.

There are errors and some of them conspicuous; the pioneer Methodist missionaries, Rev. George and Rev. John McDougall, were not brothers as stated but were father and son. And misleading is the statement about the Matador Ranch amid references to events in the late '80s that "Forty miles north of Swift Current was the Matador Ranch, a government grazing lease operated by a group of Texas cattlemen." Actually, it was not until 1903 that the Matador Land and Cattle Company, with headquarters in Dundee, Scotland, but operating in Texas, made application for a grazing lease, and the first cattle arrived on the Canadian grass in 1905.

But the book represents an excellent contribution to Jubilee Year. The shifting Saskatchewan scenes are depicted vividly, especially those from homestead years, rebellion, railroad construction, war years, drought and the new economy sparked by oil, uranium, potash and so on. The political changes in a politically vigorous province are described well and without evident political bias. The book leaves no doubt about the richness of Saskatchewan's story. And though some more highly academic reviews have pointed up other reasons for criticism, it may be stated confidently that for most of us the book offers pleasant and profitable reading.

In the concluding paragraph in the book, the spirit of Saskatchewan is epitomized effectively and touchingly with a scene from Melville. In mid-November, 1954, the Melville Community Rink, equipped with an artificial ice plant, burned down for the second time, just before the hockey season was to begin. At the hour of midnight, as spectators watched the roof disintegrate amid the flames, someone remarked: "Too bad—but we'll build it again!"

FORT YUKON TRADER, by C. Masten Beaver. Exposition Press, New York, 1955. 185 pages. $3.50.

Reviewed by Douglas Leechman

FORT Yukon, once an important Hudson's Bay Company post, has always been of particular interest for, though neither the most northerly nor the most westerly, it was certainly the most northwesterly of all their posts. Then, too, it became famous for having found itself on the wrong side of an international boundary before the boundary had been drawn. First established in 1847, and later moved to the right side of the line, there is still a trading post in Fort Yukon, conducted by the Northern Commercial Company, not far from where the first post stood.

As a new member of the staff of the N.C. post, C. Masten Beaver arrived in Fort Yukon in 1943 with his wife, both cheechakos, but already in love with the North and keen to become old timers as soon as possible. How well they succeeded can be seen from the fact that Mr. Beaver is now United States Commissioner and Probate Judge for Northwestern Alaska.

His book, *Fort Yukon Trader*, is a delight. It is not an adventure story, or a superficial account of a hurried visit, but a description of life there written from the inside, from personal knowledge and experience. The complete accuracy and authenticity sound a welcome note. There are no dramatics; there is no exaggeration; but there is a great sympathy for, and understanding of, the Indians and the half-breeds, and affection for the old timers.

It was good to read of old friends, such as Jim Jackson "the lovable old trader from Old Crow," now dead, alas. And of Dr. Disosway, that incredible but highly competent lady medico. Of Ed Toussaint, and the Rev. Mr. Files, and his son, Willy, who had an alarming vocabulary for one so young and so innocent. It's a fine book: readable, accurate, and highly recommended.

UMIAK! by D. W. Gillingham. Museum Press Ltd., London, 222 pages. $3.50.

Reviewed by R. H. G. Bonnycastle

"*UMIAK*! *Umiak*!" the Western Arctic Eskimos shout when they see a boat approaching. Correctly interpreted, the word denotes the Eskimo woman's boat: native-made of walrus skins stretched over a wooden frame; large, safe, and propelled by any number of paddlers. Colloquially it is applied to any boat or ship, and in this case *Umiak* is the S.S. *Baychimo*, famous H B C supply ship which provisioned the Western Arctic posts from 1925 to 1931 when she was abandoned in the ice.

The author shipped as a seaman on the *Baychimo's* first voyage into the Western Arctic, in 1925, when she took the place of the *Lady Kindersley* lost in the ice the year before. Having sailed in her myself on H B C business from 1926 to 1931, I took up the book with considerable curiosity. After the 1925 voyage Gillingham wrote a number of magazine articles about the voyage, and I thought here was probably another pot-boiler dealing mostly with the ship's last and most dramatic voyage recounted from hearsay rather than personal experience. However, I found it an extremely well-written account of the Arctic in general and that first voyage in particular, and entirely typical of any of the voyages I made in the ship.

It is all there. The officers and men; Captain S. A. Cornwell, Master; Capt. Gus Foellmer, ice pilot; First Mate F. L. Coe; Second Mate "Shorty" Summers. All well-known to Western Arctic men of that decade. The miscellaneous cargo destined for remote posts reached only once per year and sometimes missed at that. The romance, the indescribable beauty, and the deep appeal of the ice fields, the midnight sun, the barren arctic topography—are all handled for the most part with an artist's touch.

The toughest part of the 1925 voyage was being ice-bound at Herschel Island for almost the entire month of September when they had actually given up hope of getting out and were preparing to winter. A last-minute attempt at the very end of the month was miraculously successful,

• Dr. Leechman, formerly anthropologist with the National Museum, is now director of Canadiana with the Glenbow Foundation, Calgary.

• Mr. Bonnycastle, president of Stovel-Advocate Press, Winnipeg, was formerly manager of the H B C Western Arctic Division.

and they won through past Point Barrow when people outside were giving them up for lost.

This was a happier ending than the 1931 voyage when the ship was abandoned near the same Point Barrow in mid-October and, solidly imprisoned in the ice, drifted a derelict in the arctic seas for several years. For this last experience of the old ship, Mr. Gillingham draws on the records, including this reviewer's account in the *Beaver* at the time, as well as the account of Miss Isobel Hutchinson (in *North to the Rime-Ringed Sun*) who actually boarded the *Baychimo* after the vessel had been adrift for two years. He says the ship is known to have drifted for five years, whereas I believe she was not seen later than two seasons after the year when we were obliged to walk ashore near the Sea Horse Islands.

All in all, this is a faithful account of a typical supply voyage to the primitive Arctic, well illustrated with 26 first-class photographs. We may not always agree with some of the author's judgments on arctic policies and people, but it is an accurately and sympathetically written book.

HIGH TIDE AND AN EAST WIND, the story of the Black Duck, by Bruce S. Wright. The Stackpole Co., Harrisburg, Penn., and Wildlife Management Institute. 162 pages. $4.50.

Reviewed by Clarence Tillenius

BETWEEN the duck hunter crouched in his blind tingling with eagerness for the morning flight and the biologist patiently working out graphs of distribution and courtship ritual or analysing stomach contents, there is a community of interest sometimes little suspected by the former. Yet, it is now many years since a few more thoughtful sportsmen, observing the alarming decrease in the ranks of waterfowl and the vast increase in the disciples of the hipboot and scatter gun, began with steadily growing enthusiasm to support a program of research to find out what, if anything, could be done to insure that duck hunting might be preserved to the nation. The famous Waterfowl Research Station at Delta, Manitoba, has from 1936 been a focal point of these studies in Canada and in 1947 the Northeastern Wildlife Station was founded on the campus of the University of New Brunswick at Fredericton, a project strongly urged by the author of the present book.

The layman's reaction to a program of scientific research is often (and, though low be it spoken, not always without cause) that of the golfer to his partner in the venerable cartoon from *Punch:* "Now you've got this to save the match, so none of your science—just bung it in!" However, as a discussion on what should be done to save our ducks customarily brought out as many divergent opinions as there were debaters, it was apparent that what was urgently required was a large body of observations gathered by trained men in all parts of the country which, when subjected to analysis and comparison, would furnish accurate information on what factors actually *do* cause ducks to increase or decline.

This book is such a compilation of observations, and deals with one species, the Black Duck. It is not likely that it will appeal to a wide public, chiefly because the author has had constantly to bear in mind that a great many details of observation, which for the sake of style might have been omitted, could well be of great significance to the scientist and so must be included. It is therefore a work for biologists, ornithologists, and a sprinkling of interested laymen—this term including anyone keen on knowing what is being done in the duck world.

Besides numerous charts, diagrams and photos, the book is further enhanced by attractive black and white illustrations by Peter Ward, well known to all who visit the Waterfowl Research Station at Delta.

• Mr. Clarence Tillenius who drew and wrote about the fur bearers, last issue, is well known as artist, author, and naturalist.

Briefer Notices

HAIR EMBROIDERY IN SIBERIA AND NORTH AMERICA, by Geoffrey Turner. Oxford University Press, 1955. 83 pp. + 16 pp. illus. 15s.

WITH the thorough scholarship that one would expect, Mr. Turner of the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford has composed a highly interesting account of the various ways in which native embroiderers have used, and are using, the hairs of the moose, reindeer, caribou, and horse in decorating clothes and household ornaments. Moose-hair embroidery, especially, is often mistaken for porcupine quillwork, and one chapter shows how the various hairs may be identified. Under "Distribution and Designs" the author remarks: "Finally we must return to the Mackenzie area to find our craft, in what may be its last home, completing full circle: from nuns to Indians [in Quebec] and from Indians back to nuns." Excellent photographs clearly illustrate the various points the author makes.—*C.W.*

ARCTIC ASSIGNMENT, by Sgt. F. S. Farrar, R.C.M.P. Macmillan, Toronto, 1955. 180 pages. $2.00

THIS book is published by Macmillan's in their new historical series for young people. As a story for boys it has not much to commend it. There are no feats of individual heroism or stamina which earlier accounts of arctic exploration would lead them to expect.

Credit is not given to the pioneer voyages of Hudson's Bay Company vessels over the most difficult stretches of the passage route many years before the *St. Roch* voyage. There are also a few minor errors, such as the reference to the *St. Roch* standing by the *Fort Ross* instead of the

Fort James which was crushed by ice-pressure, and the death of Amunsden while searching for lost *Russian* rather than Italian fliers.

The author lost an opportunity to portray convincingly the characters of the crew members, as this reviewer remembers them, through lack of experience in the writing of dialogue. The story is much over-dramatized and is unlikely to appeal to the age group for which it is intended. The laconic remark made by Capt. Larsen to the press on the completion of the east-west voyage sums up the voyages—"Routine."—*A. D. Copland.*

MEDICINE IN MANITOBA, The Story of Its Beginnings, by Ross Mitchell. Winnipeg, 1955. 141 pages.

FOR Dr. Mitchell, we suspect that this was a labour of love. As the leading medical historian of Manitoba, he has been assembling data for such a book over a period of many years. Beginning with Indian medicine, the story goes on to deal with the early H B C surgeons, those of the Selkirk Settlement, and the H B C doctors after the union with the North West Company, some of whom, like John McLoughlin and John Rae, became famous in fields other than that of medicine. After the Province of Manitoba was formed in 1870, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba was formed, including many doctors who had come from the east. Two of the most interesting later chapters deal with "Doctors as Naturalists" and "Doctors as Explorers."—*C.W.*

THREE CAME WITH GIFTS, by Anna B. Montreuil. Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1955. 84 pages. $3.50.

THE early days of the French regime in Canada have a special flavour of adventure, spiced by the exploits of such picturesque characters as Cavelier de la Salle, Dollard des Ormeaux, Count Frontenac, and Le Moyne d'Iberville. The stage on which they acted out their parts was one of heroic size, stretching from the icy seas of the Arctic to the steaming swamps of the Mississippi delta. The centre of that stage, however, was on the St. Lawrence, and there the humble deeds of the women folk were no less heroic than the feats of the adventurers. This book deals with three of these women—the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, the beautiful Mme. de la Peltrie, and Mère Marie de l'Incarnation, whose letters give such a vivid picture of life there in the mid-17th century. Their monuments are the Hotel Dieu and the Ursuline Convent, both in Quebec City.

In this book of 84 pages, no less than 24 are devoted to interesting illustrations, ancient and modern.—*C.W.*

THE VOYAGEUR, by Grace Lee Nute. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, 1955. 289 pages. $4.00.

COLLECTORS of literature on the old fur trade will be delighted to know that Dr. Nute's coveted book on the Canadian voyageur is once more available. The original was published by Appleton's in 1931, but has long been out of print. This is the definitive work in English on the French-Canadians who manned the great canoes of the fur trade from Montreal to the Pacific and the far northwest. It describes the voyageur's costume (which was much more varied than the illustrations would lead one to suppose), his canoe, his songs, his life in the forts, and so on. If there is one impression that remains above all after one closes the book, it is amazement at the endurance and strength and hardihood of these vanished Canadians.—*C.W.*

ANNA AND THE INDIANS, by Nan Shipley. The Ryerson Press, Toronto. 237 pages. $3.75.

THIS is a series of dramatized episodes for which the life of Anna Gaudin, wife of a pioneer missionary of northern Manitoba, forms the base. It concerns the Nelson River region where Mrs. Gaudin without remuneration pioneered nursing among the Crees at the turn of the century. The devastation laid by the 'flu epidemic at Cross Lake after the First World War forms the most moving chapter in the book. Mrs. Shipley's vivid descriptions of the Nelson River country, particularly a short passage on muskeg and another on Indian dogs, give the book good atmosphere.

Introduced into the narrative are descriptions of such traditional activities as portaging and bannock-making. Careful research has been done on these, but in the early part of the book they have been brought in awkwardly and make for jerkiness. The illustrations by Neil Hoogstraten are attractive. The title is certainly a good one, but unfortunately sounds like a sequel to the famous *Anna and the King of Siam!*—*B.P.D.*

HENRY HUDSON, by Ronald Syme. Geo. J. McLeod, Toronto, and Wm. Morrow, N.Y. 1955. 190 pages. $2.50.

HENRY Hudson has always been one of the great and tragic figures of 17th century exploration, linked with the European and American Arctic as well as with the river that flows past the skyscrapers of Manhattan. This book for boys tells briefly of his adventurous life. Excerpts from his journals' as well as the author's own seafaring experience, lend reality to the narrative, which is enhanced by William Stobbs' bold drawings. The end-paper maps, however, are not in the same class.—*C.W.*

madame x

Nobody seems to know much about this little lady: except that an unknown Indian carved this stone likeness of her, a long time ago.

Chances are, though, this Madame X is really an old customer of ours, the early counterpart of today's homemaker . . . a familiar figure we see shopping daily in our giant multi-storey department stores or in "The Bay" stores, our smaller departmental stores.

Hudson's Bay Company.
INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670.

A CANADIAN INSTITUTION FOR THREE CENTURIES

100% pure Botany wool fabric imported from England in a wide selection of authentic tartans, exclusive checks and distinctive solid shades . . . a fine lightweight material . . . styled in Canada for smartness and comfort.

for the perfect shirt for leisure hours look for this label . . .

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY
INCORPORATED 1670
THE SEAL OF QUALITY

Masterpieces of leisure wear for MEN